

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
Monterey, California



THESIS

TRENDS IN NAVY OFFICER ATTITUDES TOWARD  
THE "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL" POLICY

by

Margaret R. Friery

March, 1997

Thesis Advisor:

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**TRENDS IN NAVY OFFICER ATTITUDES TOWARD THE  
“DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL” POLICY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT**

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## ABSTRACT

The current policy concerning homosexuals and military service, commonly called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," has been in place since 1994. The policy states that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service" and draws a distinction between sexual conduct and sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is considered a private matter and sexual conduct is an offense punishable by discharge from the military. The purpose of this thesis is to study trends in the attitudes of Navy officers toward homosexuals and officers' understanding of the policy. The research approach was modeled after a 1994 thesis at the Naval Postgraduate School, and it involved two phases: a fifty-question survey distributed to all (approximately 800) Naval officers attending the Naval Postgraduate School; and focus group interviews to explore issues raised in the survey. The results suggest that officers are even more uncertain in 1996 than in 1994 about basic elements of the policy, and they tend to interpret the policy pragmatically, balancing mission requirements against individual needs. Additionally, most officers continue to hold negative opinions about serving with known homosexuals; however, the intensity of their feelings appears to be decreasing. It is recommended that officers attend annual training on the policy to ensure an evenhanded approach in dealing with homosexuals. Further study of the policy is also recommended.





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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND: THE POLITICAL SETTING

In January 1993, President Clinton requested that the Secretary of Defense issue a draft executive order to end discrimination in the military based on sexual orientation. The Senate Armed Services Committee held nine days of hearings with testimony from a wide range of witnesses, including the Secretary of Defense, the chiefs of staff of the armed services, active duty officers and enlisted personnel, and activists supporting or opposing the proposed policy.

The Department of Defense (DOD) commissioned a study by the RAND Corporation and convened a military working group composed of senior-level members of each service to study the issue of homosexuals and the military's response to social change. In July 1994, the Secretary of Defense proposed a policy based on the military working group's recommendations. The new policy, called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue," assumed that homosexual conduct is incompatible with military service because it is disruptive to good order and discipline, unit cohesion, and the morale of the force. Most people now refer to the policy simply as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." See "An Overview of the Debate on Homosexuals in the Military" for a discussion of the issue.<sup>1</sup>

Military recruits would not be asked to reveal their sexual *orientation*; however, service members would be discharged for homosexual *conduct*. In addition, service members

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<sup>1</sup> David Burrelli, "An Overview of the Debate on Homosexuals in the Military," in *Guys and Lesbians in the Military: Issues, Concerns, and Contrasts*, ed. Wilbur J. Scott and Sandra Carson Stanley, (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994) pp. 17-31.

would be guilty of homosexual conduct if they: (1) engaged in or attempted to engage in homosexual acts; (2) stated that they are a homosexual or a bisexual; or (3) married or attempted to marry a person of the same sex.<sup>2</sup>

Since its inception, the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy has been attacked by groups on both sides of the issue. The only common theme is that the policy has left few people completely satisfied. Even after its adoption, Congress continues to debate the policy, lawyers across the country argue its fairness in court and unit commanders struggle with its implementation. During the 1996 Presidential election, the military policy simmered on the “back burner” of political and legal fronts across the nation.

The Congressional debate over homosexuals in the military heated up again when a repeal of the policy was added to the fiscal year 1997 defense appropriation bill. Members of the House of Representatives voted to return to the pre-Clinton policy and also to discharge all HIV-positive military personnel with less than 15 or more than 20 years of service. The leader of efforts to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and to institute the HIV provision was Representative Robert K. Dornan (R-Ca.), the chairman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Committee on National Security. Dornan said that each HIV-positive service member costs the government approximately \$15,000 yearly in prescription drugs; moreover, according to Dornan, these service members are not fully deployable, so they make military life more difficult for others without the disease.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Chief of Naval Operations, “Implementation of DOD Policy on Homosexual Conduct,” Message, 1 March 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Rick Maze, “Dornan Vows No Retreat on Gay Ban, HIV Policy,” Army Times, 28 August 1996.

Several House Democrats and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili, opposed the bill, because they believed it discriminated against one small group of non-deployable personnel. According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Discharging service members deemed fit for duty would waste the government's investment in the training of these individuals and be disruptive to the military programs in which they play an integral role.<sup>4</sup>

The House remained divided on the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, with some members favoring the current policy while others wanted a nondiscriminatory policy instead. In the end, the House of Representatives passed the bill and counted on the Senate to defeat it.

According to *Army Times*, Dornan was not included on the list of House negotiators at the defense appropriations conference committee. By not naming Dornan as a negotiator, the House signaled to the Senate that Dornan's strong support for the proposed legislation could be overlooked.<sup>5</sup> After negotiations, both provisions were removed from the final 1997 defense appropriations bill.

Dornan would not accept defeat, however. He introduced new bills, HR3925 and HR3926, that would restore the ban on homosexuality and discharge all HIV-positive personnel with less than 15 or more than 20 years of service. He told reporters he felt confident that the new legislation would be approved during the 105th session of Congress, after Senators Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), William Cohen (R-Me.), and Mark Hatfield (R-Or.) retired.<sup>6</sup> Nunn, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, was largely responsible for creating the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Cohen, a senior

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<sup>4</sup> Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, "Clinton Assails HIV Provision as Unconstitutional," 10 February, 1996, p. 362.

<sup>5</sup> Rick Maze, "Dornan Vows No Retreat on Gay Ban."

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Hatfield, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, helped the Democrats block Dornan's bills. As it turned out, Dornan himself was defeated in his reelection bid to be a part of the 105th Congress; and Cohen became Secretary of Defense in 1997.

The courts have also been involved in the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" controversy. Three homosexuals, Keith Meinhold, Margarethe Cammermyer, and Miriam Ben-Shalom, won their cases and were reinstated to active duty. Compared with more current cases, these court decisions appear inconsistent;<sup>7</sup> however, they tested the previous policy where homosexual statements were not construed as evidence that a service member would commit a homosexual act.<sup>8</sup> Meinhold, Cammermyer, and Ben-Shalom won reinstatement based on an equal protection challenge, arguing that they had the right to be classified as homosexuals. Joseph Steffan, a former Naval Academy midshipman, was also tried under the old policy and ultimately lost, because the courts decided that people who classify themselves as homosexual are likely to commit a homosexual act, and the military prohibits such conduct.<sup>9</sup> Under the current policy, service members who state that they are homosexual must rebut the presumption they intend to commit a homosexual act.

Currently, there are five court challenges to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy at the Appellate Court level and three at the District Court level. The pending court challenges contend that the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy violates service members'

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<sup>7</sup> Nick Adde, "Court Rulings Inconsistent," Navy Times, 11 November, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Kelly E. Henrikson, "Note and Comment: Gays, the Military, and Judicial Deference: When Courts Must Reclaim Equal Protection as Their Area of Expertise," The Administrative Law Journal, Washington College of Law, Winter 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Alan N. Yount, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Same Old Policy in a New Uniform?" Journal of Contemporary Health Law and Policy, The Catholic University of America, Fall 1995.



First and Fifth Amendment rights to free speech, equal protection, and due process. Of the cases heard in the Appellate Courts, four have ruled that the policy does not violate any Amendment rights, given deference to the military with respect to issues of national security.<sup>10</sup> The Supreme Court refused to hear *Thomasson v. Perry*, the first “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” case to work its way to the top of the judicial system, because the appeals courts have consistently upheld the policy.<sup>11</sup> Although the Supreme Court decision did not set a precedent, the last ruling on Thomasson’s case was final. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals deferred to the judgment of the military and Congress to create a fair policy for homosexuals, and the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was left intact.

The courts have traditionally looked to Congress and the President to make decisions regarding the military and military readiness, because the Constitution calls for a separation of powers, the military is considered “a specialized society separate from civilian society,” and the judiciary system typically deems itself inept at resolving military issues. For these reasons, the courts are reluctant to check the ability of the President or Congress in carrying out duties associated with national security.<sup>12</sup>

The Servicemember’s Legal Defense Fund (SLDN), a privately-funded organization that provides legal-aid for service members charged with being homosexual, summarized violations of the policy in two annual reports.<sup>13</sup> Newspapers frequently carry

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<sup>10</sup> C. Dixon Osburn, “The Road to the Supreme Court Under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue,” Servicemember’s Legal Defense Network Press release, [www.sldn.org](http://www.sldn.org), 1 July, 1996.

<sup>11</sup> “Gay Policy Survives Court Challenge, Former Sailor’s Case is Rejected,” *The Virginian Pilot*, 22 October 1996, p. A1.

<sup>12</sup> RAND, *Sexual Orientation and the U.S. Military and Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment*, National defense Research Institute Study, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993), pp. 339-340.

<sup>13</sup> Michelle M. Benecke and C. Dixon Osburn, “Conduct Unbecoming Continues: The First Year Under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue,” [www.sldn.org](http://www.sldn.org)., 28 February 1995 and “Conduct Unbecoming: Second Annual Report On “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue” – March 1, 1995-February 27, 1996,” [www.sldn.org](http://www.sldn.org).

stories and editorials criticizing the uneven implementation of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.<sup>14</sup> One of the earliest accounts involved Marine Corporal Kevin Blaesing, who was discharged after asking a Navy psychologist questions about sexual orientation. A year later, Navy Seaman Amy Barnes was discharged after she and 60 other women were asked about their sexual orientation during a “witch hunt” aboard the *USS Simeon Lake*. Most recently, an Airman stationed at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii provided Air Force investigators with a list of personnel with whom he claimed to have had homosexual sex.<sup>15</sup>

In the first two years of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” SLDN recorded over 700 policy violations that included asking service members, as well as a member’s family and friends about their sexual orientation; initiating “witch hunts” and illegal searches to identify homosexuals within a command; and threatening perceived homosexuals both physically and verbally. SLDN also reported that women were disproportionately targeted. During the first two years of the new policy, over 20 percent of discharges involved women accused of being homosexual. This is about twice the proportion of women in the military as a whole. Additionally, the Navy and Air Force issued memoranda encouraging investigators and attorneys to go beyond the rules of evidence to build their cases against gay service members.<sup>16</sup>

The number of persons discharged for being homosexual in the Air Force doubled during 1995, in part because the Air Force began to count homosexuals discharged from

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<sup>14</sup> Clarence Page, “‘Don’t Ask’ Policy Hasn’t Worked Well,” *Dallas Morning News*, 24 October, 1996, p. 25 and Art Pine, “Few Benefit from New Military Policy on Gays,” *Los Angeles Times*, 6 February, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Nick Adde, “Hickam Airman Names 17 Others in Sex Case,” *Air Force Times*, 26 August, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Benecke and Osburn, “Conduct Unbecoming Continues: The First Year,” [www.sldn.org](http://www.sldn.org).

boot camp as being separated under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. Previously, gays discharged from boot camp were categorized by the Air Force as “fraudulent enlistments.”<sup>17</sup>

According to SLDN figures, the rate of discharge for homosexual orientation from 1991 to 1995 in the armed forces has remained at a constant .04 percent of the total active-duty force. SLDN executive directors believe that the constant discharge rate and high number of violations reflect a lack of information about the policy available to commanders and a need to reprimand commanders who do not follow the policy.

## **B. OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS**

This thesis has two primary objectives. First, it seeks to outline common themes that describe how individuals feel about homosexuality in the military. Second, it attempts to provide new information about how Naval officers at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) understand and interpret the policy, by comparing survey and interview data with data gathered as part of the thesis collected in an earlier study.

## **C. THESIS OUTLINE**

A literature review describing both sides of the debate about a homosexual’s right to serve in the military is presented in Chapter II. This is followed by a detailed methodology of the survey and focus group interviews presented in Chapter III. The results of the survey and the interviews are presented in Chapter IV. Finally, data trends and themes are discussed in Chapter V. A copy of the survey and the response

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<sup>17</sup> William Matthews, “Discharges are Down, Air Force Says,” Air Force Times, 24 October, 1996, p. 1.

frequencies from the 1994 and 1996 surveys are presented in Appendix A. Appendix B contains a copy of the SCANTRON scoring sheet used to record the survey responses. Appendix C contains the protocol used to guide the focus group interviews, and a copy of the pre-interview questionnaire is presented in Appendix D. Appendix E contains the transcript of one interview that is considered representative of the seven that were conducted.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically, changes in the military's exclusion policies have been shaped largely by the needs of the service. For example, the successful integration of blacks and women into the military was largely due to necessity. Black soldiers fought in segregated units until the Korean War when it became too costly and inefficient to maintain separate units for blacks and whites. In *Who Will Fight the Next War*, Martin Binkin explains:

By the middle of 1951, large numbers of blacks had enlisted and constituted a quarter of recruits. The influx overwhelmed the black training units in the United States and black support units in Korea, forcing the integration of Army basic training centers and assignment of black soldiers to fill shortages in white combat units.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, women's integration into the military was influenced by a need for more qualified recruits during the transition to the All-Volunteer Force in 1973. Once the numbers of women on active duty increased, the types of occupations that were open to them increased also. Military policy makers even altered the definition of combat so that more jobs could become "sex neutral."<sup>19</sup>

So far, DOD has not seen the need for the integration of homosexuals into the armed forces. In fact, the numbers of service members who have been discharged for homosexuality have been so small that no major effort has been made to gauge the cost of the military's ban on gays. As a 1992 U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report, *The DOD's Policy on Homosexuality*, states:

DOD does not maintain records of the costs associated with administering its policy; nor does it record the costs of investigating alleged cases of

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Binkin, *Who Will Fight the Next War* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1993), p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-13.

homosexuality. Accordingly, our analysis was limited to estimates of the costs of recruiting and training individuals to replace personnel discharged for homosexuality.<sup>20</sup>

From 1991 to 1994, military separations for homosexuality accounted for .04 percent of the total military population.<sup>21</sup> According to the Servicemembers' Legal Defense Network (SLDN), women have been disproportionately discharged under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, accounting for 20 percent of separations while representing only 12 percent of the total force.<sup>22</sup> GAO estimated that replacement costs (in 1990 dollars) for military personnel discharged for homosexuality averaged \$28,226 for each enlisted person and \$120,772 per officer.<sup>23</sup> From 1980 to 1990, the military discharged 16,919 personnel for homosexuality. The majority of persons discharged were enlisted white men; however, women and Navy personnel were consistently discharged at a higher rate than their rate of representation in the force. Women represented 11 percent of DOD personnel, and they accounted for 20 percent of all separations under the policy. Although the Navy made up 27 percent of the force between 1980 and 1990, 51 percent of the discharges were from this branch of service.<sup>24</sup>

Apparently, DOD has emphasized "military effectiveness" over cost with respect to its policy on homosexuals. The Defense Department's decision to exclude or include homosexuals is based primarily on two criteria, unit cohesion and mission

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<sup>20</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, *Defense Force Management: DOD's Policy on Homosexuality*, B-247235, June 12, 1992 cited in CRS Report for Congress: *Homosexuals and U.S. Military Personnel Policy*, 93-52 F, January 14, 1993, p. 63.

<sup>21</sup> Art Pine, "Few Benefit From New Military policy on Gays," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 February, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Osburn, "Conduct Unbecoming Continues."

<sup>23</sup> U.S. GAO, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. GAO., p. 63.

accomplishment. Military leaders do not want their units used for “social experiments.”

As Admiral Thomas Moorer states in the preface to *Exclusion: Homosexuals and the Right to Serve*:

When we consider changing military policy, the first question we should ask is, “Will it help us win wars?” If the answer is “no” or even “we do not know,” then we should make no such change. In the case of lifting the ban on homosexuals in the military, we have a simple choice: we can further the interests of a partisan political group, or we can strongly oppose any action which will degrade the combat readiness of our men and women in uniform.<sup>25</sup>

The same type of argument--the need to maintain effectiveness or combat readiness--was used to exclude blacks and women from the military. For example, in 1950, the Army Board to Study the Utilization of Negro Manpower concluded that the integration of blacks “however desirable as a social goal. . . would markedly reduce unit morale and combat efficiency” because, among other reasons, whites did not choose to associate with blacks.<sup>26</sup> It was thus feared that, if blacks were placed in units, cohesion would be destroyed and the unit would not fight effectively again. Combat exclusion and other policies limited the participation of women in the military.<sup>27</sup> Common concerns that hindered the full integration of women into the military included privacy, cohesion, and uncertainty about society’s acceptance of women as warriors. These arguments closely parallel the arguments used to ban homosexuals from military service.

Some observers do not agree that the integration of racial minorities in the military should be compared with the situation concerning gays. One of the strongest arguments

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<sup>25</sup> Melissa Wells-Petry, *Exclusion: Homosexuals and the Right to Serve* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1993), p. xiii.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Binkin and Mark J. Eitelberg, *Blacks and the Military* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> RAND, p.159.

against comparing the ban on homosexuals with previous racial segregation policies came from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, in a letter to Representative Patricia Schroeder:

Skin color is a benign, non-behavioral characteristic. Sexual orientation is perhaps the most profound of human behavioral characteristics. Comparison of the two is a convenient but invalid argument.<sup>28</sup>

Some proponents of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy see homosexual behavior as a choice--whereas color, sex, or mental capacity are viewed as unchangeable characteristics. Putting aside the “nature or nurture” debate over the origins of homosexual behavior, in times of need, the military has relaxed its physical, mental, and moral standards so that more citizens can qualify for military service. For instance, during World War II, the Army enlisted over 300,000 illiterate men and 100,000 convicted felons --2,000 of whom were taken directly from prison.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted, however, that in times of need, the military is not an all-volunteer force. As frequently observed, even more recently during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, DOD imposed a “stop loss” action that effectively halted most separations of personnel from active-duty service, including the separation of people who admitted to being homosexual. According to Wells-Petry, “Americans have neither the right to serve nor the right to avoid service.”<sup>30</sup>

This chapter reviews several studies of military opinion concerning homosexuality. Three common themes were found in the literature and considered important to interpreting the data collected in the survey and in the focused group interviews for this

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<sup>28</sup> David Burrelli, Homosexuals and the U.S. Military Personnel Policy, CRS Report to Congress (Washington D.C.: the Library of Congress, 1993), p. 25-26.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Eitelberg, “War or Welfare: the Military as Agent of Social Change,” draft paper, May, 1991, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Wells-Perty, p. 5.



thesis. The common themes involved the following: (1) the invasion of privacy; (2) concerns about fraternization and sexual harassment; and (3) moral revulsion. A fourth theme, fear of increased risk of disease (e.g., HIV/AIDS), is beyond the scope of this thesis.

## A. COMMON THEMES

### 1. Privacy

The privacy issue is said to be a main concern for heterosexual service members. Basically, some people are afraid that, if homosexuals are allowed to serve openly in the military, they will disregard proper etiquette by leering at and propositioning “straight” members. Ronald Ray, author of *Military Necessity and Homosexuality*, states that heterosexuals do not want to sleep, shower, or undress near others of the same sex that may be sexually attracted to them, especially with close quarters and the lack of privacy on ships or in field operations.<sup>31</sup> In an article reviewing behavior and social science data, Gregory Herek drew a different conclusion, because he saw the behavior of heterosexual men as unwarranted:

For heterosexual men, the concern about sharing showers might reflect an unwarranted assumption that gay men are likely to behave toward them in a manner analogous to the way heterosexual men would be expected to behave toward women in a comparable situation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ronald D. Ray, *Military Necessity and Homosexuality*, in *Gays: In or Out? The U.S. Military and Homosexuals - A Source Book* (New York:Brassey's, 1993), p. 64.

<sup>32</sup> Gregory Herek, “Sexual Orientation and Military Service,” *American Psychologist*, May 1993, p. 543.

## 2. Sexual Harassment/Fraternization

Closely tied to the concern about invasion of privacy are the expectations of homosexual fraternization and sexual harassment of heterosexuals. Herek writes that DOD's biggest concern about integrating homosexuals into the force relates to engage in sexual harassment. Additionally, as Herek observes, there is a commonly held belief in the military is that homosexuals are more likely than heterosexuals to engage in sexual harassment and fraternization as well as show favoritism toward others with the same sexual orientation.<sup>33</sup> According to a 1992 GAO report, *DOD's Policy on Homosexuality*, DOD does not have evidence to support this assumption; instead, it depends on the "judgment of military professionals and civilian policy makers."<sup>34</sup> Another related concern is that, by adopting a policy that accommodates homosexual behavior, the military would attract more homosexuals. The assumption here is that there are a few homosexuals in the military who serve successfully and keep their orientation hidden; however, removing the ban would encourage more homosexuals to enlist and express overt homosexual behavior.<sup>35</sup>

## 3. Moral Concerns

A number of heterosexuals find homosexual sex practices and promiscuity objectionable on the basis of religious and moral reasons. The armed forces face two possible consequences if enough people find a policy accommodating homosexuality morally askew. First, unit cohesion may be jeopardized if known homosexuals are in the

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 541.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. GAO, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Wells-Petry, p. 147.

unit.<sup>36</sup> Second, the military risks losing favor with society if society does not accept the organization's personnel policies.<sup>37</sup>

Ray states that the moral objection of heterosexuals to homosexuality may destroy unit cohesion and effectiveness in the military because heterosexual service members may refuse to work with or respect the leadership of known homosexuals in their units.<sup>38</sup>

Theodore Sarbin, author of "The Deconstruction of Stereotypes: Homosexuals and Military Policy," believes that military officers may be willing to work with homosexuals; however, they may still feel uncomfortable around them. Sarbin draws this conclusion from discussions with military personnel:

Interviews with military personnel lead to the hypothesis that the suspected or acknowledged gay person is perceived as a polluted specimen, the pollution forming an invisible miasma. . . further discussion led to the inference that somehow the space would be polluted, not by germs, but by an unarticulated conception of the gay man as a carrier of sin.<sup>39</sup>

Sarbin further observed that, although homosexuals may be perfectly adept at their jobs, stereotypes of homosexuals may prevent heterosexuals from feeling comfortable around them.<sup>40</sup>

Society's perceptions of the military are very important when considering any personnel policy, according to Melissa Wells-Perty, because these perceptions directly affect retention, recruitment, and public support for the military.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, she states:

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<sup>36</sup> Ray, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> Wells-Perty, p. 173.

<sup>38</sup> Ray, p. 65.

<sup>39</sup> Theodore R. Sarbin, "The Deconstruction of Stereotypes: Homosexuals and Military Policy" (Monterey, CA: Defense Personnel Security Research and Education Center, 1994), p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Wells-Perty p. 173.

If the military service is poorly regarded by the general public, it may become necessary to lower military enlistment or retention standards. Lower standards, however, diminish the reputation of the force further, thus creating a vicious cycle for the military personnel planners.<sup>42</sup>

A RAND study, *Sexual Orientation and the U.S. Military and Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment*, commissioned by the Secretary of Defense, found no empirical evidence to support or refute the possibility that recruitment or reenlistments would be affected if the exclusion policy were removed.<sup>43</sup> The study concluded the most significant variables that effected the enlistment decision are education and employment related considerations. On the other hand, the reenlistment decision, focuses on the service member's perception of military life. For example, if service members believe the current policy has a positive impact on their life, they may be more likely to reenlist.

## **B. EXAMPLES OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES**

The experience of the Canadian military as well as that of domestic police and fire departments provide ample evidence that a non-discriminatory policy works without sacrificing morale, cohesion, or mission accomplishment. Although of these organizations are dissimilar in many ways from the U.S. military, researchers have found the comparison worthwhile.

### **1. The Canadian Experience**

The Canadian Forces are an amalgamation of navy, army and air force that operate under an all-volunteer system. Because Canada is both bilingual and multicultural,

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> RAND, p. 405.

“management of diversity” has become an important part of its policy making, including that relating to the military.

The enactment of equal rights legislation in 1978 and 1985 compelled the Canadian Forces to review existing policies that prohibited the service of known homosexuals. A six-year study failed to justify the military’s ban on homosexuals “as a fair and reasonable limit on their rights in a free and democratic society.” The ban on homosexuals was subsequently removed in October of 1992.<sup>44</sup>

A two-year assessment of the effects of removing the ban revealed very little change in the status quo, according to Franklin Pinch:

The impact of the policy change has been minimal. Negative consequences predicted in the areas of recruitment, employment, attrition, retention and cohesion and morale have not occurred in the six month period since the revocation of the exclusionary policy. There is no indication that homosexuals are declaring themselves.<sup>45</sup>

The Canadian authorities expect that the real challenge of the policy change will be providing fair and equal levels of compensation for same-sex families. Many employers in both the United States and Canada provide leave and other family-related benefits to same-sex cohabitational arrangements.<sup>46</sup>

## **2. Police and Fire Departments**

The example of police and fire departments is relevant to the US military because these organizations are also a part of the American culture and have many elements that

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<sup>44</sup> Franklin C. Pinch, “Perspectives on Organizational Change in the Canadian Forces,” Research report 1657, January 1994, p vii.

<sup>45</sup> Pinch, p viii.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.

are similar to the military. Although police and fire fighters do not deploy for long periods of time, they do share some job characteristics with the military. For example, they all have a strong identification with the chain of command. In addition, their personnel work as teams and wear uniforms that identify them with the organization. Furthermore, members of these groups are sometimes required to put their lives on the line to complete missions. The similarities between the groups are strong enough so that the experience of the police and fire departments may be used to speculate about the interactions of homosexuals and heterosexuals in a military environment where no ban on gays exists.<sup>47</sup>

A research group from RAND examined police and fire departments that had a policy of non-discrimination against homosexuals in six of the largest cities in the nation. The researchers conducted private interviews and focus group interviews with high-ranking leaders, personnel, equal employment officers, trainers, unit commanders, recruiters, and counselors. Interviews were also conducted with rank-and-file homosexual and heterosexual members of the departments.

The information gleaned from the interviews gave the RAND researchers some insight about the number and characteristics of people who revealed their homosexuality, factors that influence homosexuals to “come out of the closet,” and the attitudes and behavior of heterosexuals who work with homosexuals. The researchers reported homosexual members of police and fire departments resembled their heterosexual counterparts physically and behaviorally. Additionally, they enjoyed similar work characteristics. They also noted that homosexuals were very sensitive to the climate of

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<sup>47</sup> Paul Koegel, “Lessons Learned from the Experience of Domestic Police and Fire Departments.” This is an abbreviated version of Chapter 4 in Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment, MR-323-OSD, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993.

acceptance they would receive if they acknowledged their homosexuality. Hostile attitudes toward homosexuality, concern for personnel safety, career, and social acceptance at work were cited as reasons to keep sexual orientation hidden. Few homosexuals “came out” in work settings. Those who revealed themselves to co-workers did so in workplaces where attitudes toward homosexuals were more tolerant, and usually after they had proven themselves on the job.

Pranks and hostility occurred mostly in cases where a homosexual’s sexual orientation was unintentionally revealed. Most often, heterosexuals accepted the homosexual member’s honesty and courage to reveal his or her sexual orientation; and they usually refrained from telling gay jokes around the homosexual member.<sup>48</sup> The gradual acceptance of homosexual co-workers appears to support the so-called “contact theory,” where, as one becomes familiar with something or someone that was once unfamiliar, fears associated with the unknown tend to disappear. As Herek explains:

The applicability of this contact hypothesis to anti-gay prejudice is supported by data showing that heterosexuals with openly gay friends or acquaintances are more likely than others to hold accepting attitudes toward gay people in general.<sup>49</sup>

Factors that help to eliminate prejudice include “conditions of equal status, common goals, cooperation and moderate intimacy.”<sup>50</sup> When these factors were present

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<sup>48</sup> RAND, p. 407.

<sup>49</sup> Gregory M. Herek, *Myths About Sexual Orientation: A Lawyers Guide to Social Science Research*, 1 *Law & Sexuality* 171 cited in Kay Kavanagh, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell: Deception Required, Disclosure Denied,” *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 1, May 1996, p. 156.

<sup>50</sup> Gregory M. Herek, *Beyond Homophobia: A Social Psychological Perspective on Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men*, in 10 *J of Homosexuality* 1,14, cited in Kay Kavanagh, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell: Deception Required Disclosure Denied,” *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 1, May 1996, p. 156.

the police and fire departments, and gays felt safe enough to reveal their sexual orientation, fears and stereotypical images of homosexuals were debunked. The U.S. military provides the same type of opportunity because, by its very nature, the military encourages team work, shared goals, and unit cohesion. Koegel describes the essence of how contact can work to change perceptions about homosexuals:

By far, positive contact was pointed to as the most potent determinant of attitudinal change. Given the opportunity to know gay and lesbian colleagues and thereby test stereotypic images of homosexuals that many heterosexuals hold, heterosexual men and women could arrive at a different understanding of homosexuality.<sup>51</sup>

Essentially, the current military policy encourages an environment of hostility toward homosexuals because the individual who knows another's sexual orientation is torn between loyalty to the friend and loyalty to the organization. RAND researchers, in the 1993 study, recommended removing the exclusion policy and relying on standards of conduct so that individuals would be rewarded or punished for their actions and behavior not the perceived effect they may have on the group. They outlined three steps that eased the transition to a conduct-based policy of non-discrimination.<sup>52</sup> First, enforce the policy consistently so that all levels of leadership say and act the same way. Second, target behavior by enforcing the rules evenly rather than trying to change the attitudes of individuals. Finally, ensure that all levels of leadership have the same degree of commitment to implement potentially unpopular policies.

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<sup>51</sup> Koegel, p. 19.

<sup>52</sup> RAND, pp. 147-150.



Although a multitude of reasons are offered to exclude homosexuals from the U.S. military, there is a body of evidence suggesting that a non-discriminatory policy toward homosexuals would not result in a loss of unit cohesion or degrade mission accomplishment. The Canadian government reported no impact on readiness as a result of lifting the exclusionary policy. The examples of police and fire departments in the United States also suggest that, within our culture, homosexuals are selective about how, when, and to whom they reveal their sexual orientation.

### **C. PAST STUDIES OF MILITARY OPINION**

Prior to the enactment of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” several studies were conducted to gauge how service members would react to a change in the military’s policy toward homosexuals. Individuals were interviewed or anonymously surveyed. This section reviews several previous studies that examined military opinion. There were four main studies, all of which were completed before the change in policy. They are:

1) A February 1993 opinion survey of military enlisted personnel completed by the *Los Angeles Times*.

2) Opinion surveys and interviews of Army officer and enlisted personnel completed between February and December 1992 by Charles Moskos and Laura Miller, sociologists from Northwestern University.

3) Focus group interviews with officer and enlisted personnel from the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps by the RAND corporation.

4) Personal interviews and opinion surveys of Navy officers attending the Naval Postgraduate School, conducted in February 1994 by LCDR Fred Cleveland and LT Mark Ohl.

### 1. *The Los Angeles Times* Survey

The *Los Angeles Times* conducted a nationwide survey of 2,346 enlisted men and women outside of 38 military bases in the continental United States.<sup>53</sup> Interviewers asked service members in base housing areas and at off-base commercial sites to fill out surveys, mail them in envelopes, and return them to the *Los Angeles Times*. The survey included 29 questions that covered many aspects of military life such as women in combat, quality of transition assistance programs, military downsizing, sexual harassment, and the ban on homosexuals.

The *Times* used a quota method to ensure that the sample population surveyed represented the demographic characteristics of the military enlisted population in the United States. The researchers sought accurate demographic representation for age, race, gender, education level, and service representation. Once the interviews were completed, the results were adjusted so that each service was proportionally represented.

The *Los Angeles Times* survey did not include the opinions of officers; therefore the results cannot be used to speculate about the opinions of all military members. Additionally, the results are biased by selection, because they only reflect the opinions of

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<sup>53</sup> Melissa Healy, "74% of Military Enlistees Oppose Lifting Gay Ban" *The Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1993, p. A1. The RAND study, *Sexual Orientation and the U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment*, included a detailed methodology for the *Los Angeles Times* Survey.

respondents who were available either shopping or in base housing on the survey days and who would respond positively to the approach of the interviewer.

Nevertheless, the survey was interesting, because the questions gauged service members' happiness with military life on a number of issues before addressing the emotional topic of homosexuality. Basically, this survey attempted to show how the service members fit homosexuality into the larger context of military life.

Overall, the majority of the enlisted service members disapproved of lifting the ban on homosexuals (59 percent "strongly" and 15 percent "somewhat"). Opposition to lifting the ban was a predominant characteristic of every demographic group. The groups that disapproved of lifting the ban the most included whites, Latinos, personnel in combat occupations, and younger service members. Older respondents, women, and blacks were only slightly more likely to approve of homosexuals in the military.

The most common reason for excluding homosexuals was privacy (63 percent), followed by moral issues (40 percent), and fear of contracting HIV/AIDS from an injured service member (28 percent). Of the 18 percent of respondents who wanted to see the ban lifted, the number one reason was discrimination (58 percent). Other reasons included "it was not important for homosexuals to be banned" (23 percent), and "homosexuals are not different from heterosexuals" (19 percent). About 2 percent of the respondents who approved of removing the ban felt that it was ineffective in keeping gays out of the military.

The differences between the services were small but interesting. A total of 86 percent of Marines surveyed disapproved of removing the ban, followed by personnel in

the Army and Air Force (both 74 percent) and the Navy (69 percent). Moreover, 28 percent of Navy respondents believed they were currently serving with a homosexual. This compared with 18 percent for the Air Force, 16 percent for the Army, and 10 percent for the Marine Corps. Overall, 18 percent of men and 29 percent of women believed they were currently serving with a homosexual.<sup>54</sup>

## 2. Moskos/Miller Surveys

From February to December 1992, Charles Moskos and Laura Miller surveyed Army officer and enlisted personnel from six Army bases in the United States and one in Somalia. The primary purpose of the research was to collect information about women in combat; however, the survey contained one question about homosexuals in the military.<sup>55</sup> Two of the surveys administered during that time contained several questions about open homosexuality in the military.<sup>56</sup> A total of 892 men and 569 women were surveyed. The researchers used a quota method to ensure proper proportions of demographic groups were represented in the sample, including soldiers who were in the Persian Gulf War.

The researchers conducted interviews and discussion groups during the entire period. The qualitative data gathered were used to expand and clarify the survey results that were similar to the results of the *Los Angeles Times* survey. For example, 76 percent of the men and 43 percent of the women in the Moskos/ Miller survey disapproved of lifting the ban on homosexuals in the military.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Healy, p. A23.

<sup>55</sup> RAND, p. 457.

<sup>56</sup> Laura Miller, "Fighting for a Just Cause: Soldiers' Views on Gays and Lesbians in the Military" in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military: Issues, Concerns, and Contrasts*, ed. Wilbur J. Scott and Sandra Carson Stanley, (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1994), pp. 69-98.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Respondents to the Moskos/Miller survey said the primary reason for maintaining the ban was that homosexuality is immoral, followed by a desire to preserve cohesion, morale, and military effectiveness, and, finally, for privacy. In “Fighting for a Just Cause,” Miller summarizes some of the highlights of the survey research.<sup>58</sup> The results of regression analysis revealed that the following personal characteristics were most strongly related to having a position on the ban: gender, occupational specialty, and having gay friends. Men were more likely than women to oppose gays in the military. People in traditionally male occupations were more likely than those in support roles to advocate the ban. Additionally, having a gay friend was a statistically stronger factor against the ban than merely knowing a homosexual relative or soldier. At the same time, Miller found that race, rank, education level, marital status, and spirituality were statistically unrelated to a person’s position on the ban.<sup>59</sup>

### **3. RAND Focus Group Interviews**

RAND conducted eighteen focus group interviews with Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps. personnel stationed in the U.S. and Germany.<sup>60</sup> No Navy personnel were included in the interviews. Officers, senior enlisted personnel, and lower-ranking personnel were interviewed in separate groups containing seven to eleven participants each. In most cases the interviewees were not selected randomly. Officers-in-Charge selected several units and asked the unit leaders to provide a few people for the interviews, which were conducted in meeting rooms on the military bases. Because the population interviewed

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 69-98.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>60</sup> RAND, pp. 221-241.

was not a random or representative sample, no attempt was made to quantify the results of the interviews. The researchers also felt that, during the interviews, participants may have overstated or understated their positions to fit in with the group.

Participants were asked a variety of questions about working conditions and military life. This gradually led to the topic of homosexuality and the related policy so that the researchers could understand how the issue fit into the larger picture of service life. Then, the researchers proceeded to ask the participants if they knew any homosexuals and, if so, how they were treated in the unit. Participants were also asked about their beliefs and attitudes toward homosexuals. The researchers wrote about the interviews by discussing themes common to all the interviews. The themes included: living and working conditions, conflict in living and work groups, racial conflict, gender conflict, and discussions of homosexuals in the military.

In every interview, the topic of homosexuality generated strong responses from the participants. One or more participants from each group served with either a known homosexual or someone strongly suspected of being gay. Privacy was, by far, the most discussed issue. Many participants--even those who knew homosexuals--were uncomfortable with sharing berthing and bathing facilities with known homosexuals for two reasons: 1) the homosexual may make unwanted sexual advances toward the heterosexual; and 2) the heterosexual was concerned about witnessing any signs of homosexual activity.

Many participants said that homosexuals are disruptive to mission accomplishment because heterosexuals cannot respect or trust them. Because of the lack of trust and

respect by their co-workers and subordinates, it was felt that they could not be effective in their jobs. Some felt it was impossible to work for a homosexual. Other interviewees were concerned that homosexual fraternization and lust would also hamper mission accomplishment.

Participants were similarly concerned that homosexuals serving openly in the military would tear apart the moral fabric of the military culture and destroy its macho image. This, it was felt, could discourage persons from enlisting or reenlisting. On the other hand, some participants thought that homosexuality was no worse than adultery, which is tolerated in the service. Others thought that gays wanted the ban lifted mainly to further their political agenda.

#### **4. Cleveland and Ohl Survey and Interviews**

In 1994, LCDR Fred Cleveland and LT Mark Ohl, students at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), investigated junior officers' understanding and interpretation of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.<sup>61</sup> Cleveland and Ohl created a written survey that was distributed to 1,000 Navy students at NPS. The response rate was 60 percent, and 8 percent of the respondents provided written comments. Cleveland and Ohl also conducted 20 personal interviews to probe issues raised in the survey.

The authors found that Naval officers did not like the policy, nor did they understand what it meant. Of those surveyed, 82 percent did not want homosexuals to serve in the military, stating that their presence would adversely affect national defense. The survey respondents and participants in the interviews were especially concerned that

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<sup>61</sup> Fred Cleveland and Mark Ohl, *"Don't Ask, Don't Tell"-Policy Analysis and Interpretation*, Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA, 1994.

homosexuals would gain a special class status. In addition, officers disagreed with the duplicity the policy implied by allowing homosexuals to serve as long as they kept that part of their nature secret. These perceptions were due in part to the lack of information provided by DOD and the abundance of media attention regarding the policy. Women, younger officers, and those who knew homosexuals tended to be more tolerant in their views about living and working with homosexuals.

The research conducted for this thesis is based on the Cleveland and Ohl study in an attempt to explore possible changes in officers' knowledge and attitudes of the policy over time. More specific information on the Cleveland and Ohl study is contained in Chapter III and Chapter IV.



### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. PHASE I: THE WRITTEN SURVEY

A 50-question survey was used to track changes in the attitudes held by Naval officers at NPS toward homosexuals and the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. The survey used in the present study was designed by Cleveland and Ohl as part of their 1994 thesis at NPS.<sup>62</sup> Seven questions were added to the Cleveland and Ohl survey. Results from the two surveys were compared to measure changes in Navy officers' attitudes at NPS after the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy had been in place for two years. The entire survey and response frequencies are presented in Appendix A.

An attempt was made to duplicate the original survey conditions as closely as possible. As with the Cleveland and Ohl survey, approval to administer the 1996 survey was first received from the Dean of Students at NPS. Surveys, answer sheets, and explanatory letters to students were distributed through the student mail center to the Navy students at NPS. Collection boxes were located near each of the thirteen curricular offices on the campus, as well as in the NPS library, at an outdoor coffee mess, and at the student mail center. Signs were posted around campus to remind students to return their surveys. On 19 April 1996, 800 surveys were distributed; a total of 306 surveys were returned by 10 May 1996. This amounts to a return rate of 38 percent.

The responses were tabulated using a computer with a SCANTRON interface, maintained by the NPS Office of the Registrar. Each answer sheet was fed into the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

interface and recorded onto a diskette. A sample data card is shown in Appendix B. The data were analyzed at the NPS Computer Center using the statistical software program SAS.

As previously noted, the response rate was 38 percent which was significantly lower than the rate of 60 percent obtained in the Cleveland and Ohl study. However, approximately one-third of the respondents in the present study provided written comments. (These are discussed with the results of the survey in Chapter IV.) This compares with just 8 percent of respondents in the Cleveland and Ohl study. The higher response rate in the earlier survey may be due to the fact that the policy was “headline news” at the time. Today, the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy is considered “old news” in military circles--and a topic that some military members prefer to avoid.

## **B. PHASE II: FOCUSED GROUP INTERVIEWS**

After collecting the survey results, the researcher wanted more information about why officers did not wish to serve with homosexuals, and how their attitudes affected the way they confronted everyday working relationships with people they perceived as gay. To answer these questions, the researcher and another NPS student, LCDR Terry Rea, designed and conducted seven focus group interviews to explore attitudes regarding service by homosexuals and the possible effect on unit cohesion. In addition, the interviews sought to determine whether “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” affected an officer’s relationship with peers and subordinates. The seven focus group interviews took place between 28 October and 2 November 1996.

The participants were NPS students who responded to an e-mail “call for volunteers” to join group interviews. Names of persons to be sent the e-mail request were randomly selected from a list generated by the Registrar’s Office. Survey respondents who indicated they were willing to participate in focused interviews were also contacted. Each group consisted of about five students. All identities of participants were held in strict confidence. The interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed by LCDR Rea.<sup>63</sup>

The interviews were conducted on the NPS campus in a private conference room in Ingersoll Hall. Before beginning the interview, the researchers read a protocol stating the objectives of the study. It also contained a list of questions to guide the interviews. (A copy of the protocol is included in Appendix C.) Then, the participants were given a short questionnaire (presented in Appendix D), to document that individuals were represented from a wide array of the Navy officer population as well as a range of attitudes regarding the topic. The interviews lasted about two hours each, with minimal intervention from the researchers.

## **C. DEMOGRAPHICS**

### **1. Survey Respondents**

Using demographic data provided by Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), the researcher compared the demographics of the survey respondents to those of Navy students attending NPS. Over one-third (37 percent) of the survey respondents did not

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<sup>63</sup> Terry Rea, “Unit Cohesion and the Military’s ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Policy,” Masters Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School Monterey CA, 1997.

answer the question on service community, which made it difficult to compare respondents with NPS Navy students on the basis of this variable. The gender distribution of survey respondents was similar to that of Navy students at NPS. As shown in Table 1, DMDC reported a total of 874 Navy students, including 89 percent men and 11 percent women. Of the survey respondents, 272 (91.3 percent) were men and 26 (8.7 percent) were women.

**Table 1. Comparison of NPS Navy Student Population and 1996 Survey Respondents by Gender**

Gender	Navy Students at NPS		Survey Respondents	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Male	778	89.0	272	91.3
Female	96	11.0	26	8.7

Table 2 shows that the race or ethnicity of the respondents was also similar to that of the Navy student population at NPS. Of the Navy students attending NPS, 84.1 percent were white, 7.1 percent were black, 3.6 were Hispanic, and 5.2 percent were "others." Of the survey respondents, 84.8 percent were white, 4.4 percent were black, 3.7 percent were Hispanic, and 7.1 percent were categorized as "others." Thus, a somewhat smaller proportion of survey respondents were black (2.7 percentage points), and a higher proportion were from "other" groups (1.5 percentage points).

**Table 2. Comparison of NPS Navy Student Population and 1996 Survey Respondents by Race**

Race	Navy Students at NPS		Survey Respondents	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
White	735	84.1	251	84.8
Black	62	7.1	13	4.4
Hispanic	31	3.6	11	3.7
Other	45	5.2	21	7.1

Table 3 compares the total number of Navy students at NPS with survey respondents on the basis of years of military service. The group of students with 2 to 5 years of service contained only 19 survey respondents (6.4 percent of the survey population); however, there were 44 Navy students at NPS with 5 or less years of service (5.2 percent of the population). The largest group of respondents had 6 to 9 years of service and made up 44.6 percent of the survey population. Officers with 6 to 9 years of service also accounted for the largest group of Navy students at NPS, making up 49.9 percent of the student body (436 students). The population of students with 10 to 20 years of service was over represented. This group made up 31 percent of the survey respondents and 25.4 percent of the student body. The group with 13 to 15 years of service made up 12.4 percent of the survey respondents, compared with 11 percent of the NPS student body. The group with 16 to 20 years of active duty accounted for 5.7 percent of the survey respondents and 8.1 percent of the Navy student population.

**Table 3. Comparison of NPS Navy Student Population and 1996 Survey Respondents by Years of Service**

Years of Service	Navy Students at NPS		Survey Respondents	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2-5	45	5.2	19	6.4
6-9	436	49.9	133	44.6
10-12	222	25.4	92	30.9
13-15	171	11.4	37	12.4
16-20	71	8.1	17	5.7

## 2. Interview Participants

A pre-interview questionnaire was used to document that officers with a variety of opinions and demographic characteristics participated in the interviews. The pre-interview

questionnaire was completed and collected before the interview began. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix D.

Of the thirty interviewees, eighteen were men and twelve were women. Twenty-five were white, three were black, one was Hispanic, and one claimed "other" ethnicity. Two-thirds of the participants claimed to have a gay acquaintance. The interviewees' years of military service ranged from a low of five to a high of sixteen years. Because people in group interviews may overstate or understate their positions on issues for a variety of reasons, the researchers' pre-interview questionnaire contained five statements, and interviewees were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with these statements on an anchored, ten-point scale. A score of one indicated strong agreement and a score of ten indicated strong disagreement with the statement. When interviewees were asked if they considered themselves more tolerant of homosexuality than their peers, almost two-thirds (18 officers) agreed. However, the responses were evenly distributed across the scale for the statement, "Homosexuals in the Navy can cause the downfall of good order and discipline." Even more interesting, the responses to that statement were evenly distributed at the extremes--four officers strongly agreed and four strongly disagreed. Opinions were also evenly distributed when participants were asked if they liked the current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy better than the previous policy. Fourteen officers agreed that a heterosexual's privacy aboard a ship is compromised by the presence of a homosexual. Of those, four chose a score of ten. A total of 13 officers agreed with the statement that "the presence of a homosexual in a unit would interfere with mission accomplishment."

## **D. SUMMARY**

In summary, the survey's response rate of 38 percent was less than the response rate of the earlier study; however, the demographic composition of survey respondents was reasonably similar to that of the representation closely matched the Navy student population at NPS.

The results from the pre-interview questionnaire showed that officers who volunteered for the focus group interviews had varying opinions on homosexuals serving in the military. Most interviewees thought they were more tolerant than their peers on the issue of homosexuality in the military; however, responses varied from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" on all the remaining questions.





#### IV. RESULTS

A majority of the 1996 survey respondents hold anti-homosexual opinions. At the same time, there is a strong minority of officers with more tolerant opinions. The results of this survey are similar to the findings of previous research conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*, RAND, Charles Moskos and Laura Miller, and Fred Cleveland and Mark Ohl. Although about 80 percent of officers surveyed in 1996 did not want homosexuals serving in their command, the percentage of those who “strongly agree” with this statement has decreased by 10 percentage points from the survey completed two years earlier. (See Appendix A, “Survey and Response Frequencies,” question 2.) This change possibly suggests that the intensity of views against the military service of homosexuals is decreasing.

The opinions and anecdotes of the officers interviewed amplified the results from the survey. The majority of officers interviewed did not want to serve with people who were openly homosexual for the following reasons: privacy, moral objections, and concern about fraternization or sexual harassment. Overall, both survey respondents and interview participants displayed a poor grasp of the policy, and some were even confused about the actual intent of the policy. Further, some felt the policy contradicted itself and was not in keeping with the Navy’s core values.

This chapter discusses four major areas and is entirely based on the results of both the survey and the focus group interviews. The first major area addresses officers’ attitudes toward homosexuality. The researcher examined the survey results for trends

between demographic groups and attitudes about homosexuality. Then, the researcher compared demographic trends discussed by Cleveland and Ohl with the results of the 1996 survey. In the second major area, written comments from the survey, interview data, and specific survey questions were used to examine how officers' attitudes toward homosexuality may influence the way in which they interpret the policy. The third major area examined officers' understanding of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" through an analysis of the survey questions and focus group interviews. In the fourth area, ideas expressed in the focus group interviews were used to discuss implications of the policy by checking its most basic assumptions: 1) "homosexuality is incompatible with military service"<sup>64</sup>; and 2) the policy reflects the views of the military today.

Each of the four major areas discussed above is headed by the following research questions:

- \* What are the differences in officers' attitudes toward homosexuals among different demographic groups?

- \* Are elements of the policy interpreted differently in 1996 than they were when the policy was first introduced?

- \* Are officers more familiar with the policy in 1996 than they were two years earlier?

- \* What are the implications of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" for Naval officers?

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<sup>64</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Directive 1332.15, Enlisted Administrative Separations, 28 January, 1982.

**A. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES IN OFFICERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS AMONG DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS OR SERVICE COMMUNITIES?**

A Chi-square test was used to answer the questions posed above because it is a common test for independence between the variables expressed in terms of frequencies and percentages. Additionally, the researcher used Kendall's Tau-b to determine the direction of the relationship between the variables. Based on the results of previous research, it was hypothesized that demographic variables would be related to attitudes about homosexuals. Specifically, women would be more tolerant of homosexuals than men, and Hispanic officers would be less tolerant of homosexuals than whites or blacks. In addition, the researcher expected that people who knew homosexuals would be more likely to have a favorable attitude toward working with them (contact theory).

Throughout this part of the analysis, two trends emerged: 1) the respondents' demographic characteristics, which included gender, years of service, and ethnicity, were generally unrelated to how they answered the survey questions; and 2) people who reported they knew homosexuals were more likely than people who did not know any homosexuals to have a favorable opinion about serving with them.

**1. Relationship of Demographic Variables with Attitudes Toward Homosexuals**

To compare attitudes within demographic groups over time, the researcher compared cross-tabulations of demographic characteristics by questions from the 1996 survey with identical cross-tabulations from the Cleveland and Ohi study. The results revealed interesting patterns in three areas: seniority, gender, and contact theory. Overall,

the results of the two surveys were very similar, suggesting that attitudes toward homosexuals and knowledge of the policy have remained fairly constant over time.

*a. Seniority*

Question 21, “ People are either homosexually or heterosexually oriented,” and question 29, “I would not want a gay person as a neighbor,” were cross-tabulated with the length of service variable from each survey group. The results are presented in Table 4. At first glance, the results from the 1994 and 1996 surveys appear very similar. After closer examination; however, subtle differences between respondents in the same years-of-service group become apparent. In the 1994 survey, 48 percent of the respondents with 13 to 15 years of service agreed that people are either homosexually or heterosexually oriented. In the 1996 survey, only 26 percent of the same group agreed with the statement, suggesting, perhaps, an increasing awareness of the complexity of sexual orientation.

In the 1994 survey, 50 percent of officers with 13 to 15 years of service agreed that they would not want a gay person as a neighbor--including 24 percent who felt “strongly” about it. In the 1996 survey, 42 percent of the same group agreed with the statement, and the proportion of those who “strongly” agreed was nearly halved at 13 percent.

**Table 4: Attitudes by Years of Service: Comparison of Responses (in percent) to Selected Questions from the 1994 and 1996 Surveys**

Survey Question	21. People are either homosexually or heterosexually oriented.							
Years of Service	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96
2-5	12	5	15	21	51	63	22	11
6-9	7	10	28	23	54	53	11	14
10-12	10	9	35	29	45	45	10	17
13-15	5	5	43	21	38	61	14	13

  

Survey Question	29. I would not want a gay neighbor.							
Years of Service	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96
2-5	4	11	29	16	57	68	10	5
6-9	12	13	29	27	46	48	13	12
10-12	13	9	35	30	41	44	11	17
13-15	24	13	26	29	32	40	18	18

***b. Gender Comparison***

In the 1994 survey, it was found that women were generally more tolerant than men of homosexuals. Table 5 shows that, in some cases, both women and men were apparently more tolerant in 1996 than they were in 1994. For example, on question 2, “I prefer not to have homosexuals in my command,” 80 percent of male respondents agreed, compared with 48 percent of female respondents. Even more interesting is that, in 1994, 60 percent of women said they did not want homosexuals in their command; in 1996, the percentage of women who agreed with the statement dropped by 12 points. It should also be noted that the proportion of male respondents who agreed with this statement fell by 6 percentage points between 1994 and 1996.

**Table 5. Attitudes by Gender: Comparison of Responses to Selected Questions from the 1994 and 1996 Surveys**

Survey Question	Responses in percent			
	Male Agree		Female Agree	
	'94	'96	'94	'96
1. Full acceptance of gays in the military sends the wrong message to society	75	68	48	42
2. Prefer not to have homosexuals in my command	86	80	60	48
30. Socializing in "gay bars" is sexual misconduct	34	23	7	20
32. I have no difficulty obeying orders to work with a gay co-worker	46	61	74	69

The proportion of women who agreed with question 30, "Socializing in gay bars is sexual misconduct," rose by 13 percentage points in the two years between surveys. This response was an unexpected result that may be due to poor training Navy-wide, or it may be related to the small number of women in the sample. Another noticeable change between surveys was the response of male officers to question 32. In 1994, 46 percent of men agreed that they would have no trouble obeying orders to work with a homosexual on a dangerous assignment. In 1996, that proportion rose above 60 percent. The proportion of women who agreed with the statement dropped from 74 percent in 1994 to 69 percent in the more recent survey. Follow-up questions during the focus group interviews did not help to explain this result.

## 2. Contact Theory

### a. 1996 Results

The contact theory hypothesis was evaluated using a Chi-square test of the independence in attitudes between respondents who reported knowing a homosexual from those who reported not knowing a homosexual. In Table 6, the results of the Chi-square tests that were significant at the .05 level are presented to evaluate the contact theory hypothesis. In the first column of Table 6, the sign associated with significance level was the result of the Kendall's Tau-b test for the direction of the relationship. The negative sign in the first row of the table indicates that people who knew homosexuals were more likely to disagree with the statement, "I prefer not to have homosexuals in my command." These people were also more likely than those who didn't know any homosexuals to feel that homosexuality does not interfere with leadership ability or the preservation of good order and discipline. Further, people who knew homosexuals were more likely to feel comfortable interacting with them, and they additionally see themselves as "more tolerant" than their peers.

**Table 6. Contact Theory: Direction of Relationship and Significance of Chi-square Test of 1996 Respondents Who Knew a Homosexual**

Sign	Sig. level	Survey question
-	.004	2. I prefer that no homosexuals serve in my command.
-	.013	11. Homosexuals can cause the downfall of good order and discipline.
-	.0001	23. I feel uncomfortable interacting normally with homosexuals.
+	.003	24. Sexual preference has no effect on leadership.
+	.0001	35. I am more tolerant than my peers.

Table 7 shows a more accurate picture of the differences in attitudes between people who knew homosexuals and those who did not by comparing the response rates for the two groups. In fact, 69 percent of officers who claimed to know a homosexual agreed with the statement, "I prefer to have no homosexuals in my command" (question 2). This compares with 84 percent of officers who did not know a homosexual. Additionally, almost identical proportions of both groups agreed with question 11, "Homosexuals can cause the downfall of good order and discipline." Although it appears that both groups disapprove of homosexuality in the military, persons who have had contact with homosexuals are also more confident with interacting with them. Of the respondents who did not know any homosexuals, 15 percent strongly agreed that they felt uncomfortable interacting with them (question 23); this compares with only 5 percent of officers who claimed to know a homosexual. Over 57 percent of officers who did not know a homosexual saw themselves as more tolerant of homosexuals than their peers (question 35). Twenty percent of officers who knew a homosexual strongly agreed that sexual preference has no effect on leadership ability (question 24). In contrast, only 8 percent of officers who did not know a homosexual strongly agreed with this statement.



**Table 7. Contact Theory: Comparison of Responses (in percent) Between Officers Who Knew Homosexuals and Those Who Did Not, 1996 Survey**

Survey Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
45. I know a homosexual								
2. I prefer that no homosexuals serve in my command	44	48	25	36	20	13	11	3
11. Gays can cause the downfall of good order and discipline	30	35	32	35	22	26	16	4
23. I feel uncomfortable interacting normally with gays	5	15	28	39	47	41	20	5
24. Sexual preference has no effect on leadership	20	8	31	47	33	30	16	15
35. I am more tolerant than my peers	25	8	46	49	26	36	2	7

*b. Comparison of 1994 and 1996 Survey Results*

One obvious difference between the 1994 and 1996 survey results is the proportion of respondents who claimed to know a homosexual. In the two years between surveys, an additional 17 percent of respondents reported they had a friend or relative who was a homosexual (29 percent in 1994 compared with 46 percent in 1996). The dramatic increase is most likely due to a change in the question. In the 1994 survey, people could answer “yes,” “no,” or “possibly.” In the 1996 survey, the “possibly” option was omitted.

Nevertheless, if more respondents in the 1996 survey say they knew someone who is a homosexual, the expectation is that their attitudes would be more tolerant than those held by officers in the 1994 survey. As shown in Table 8, in the 1996 survey, 18 percent of people who had a gay acquaintance reported that they felt

uncomfortable with a homosexual (question 23). In the earlier survey, 33 percent of the same group agreed with the statement, suggesting greater intensity. Additionally, twice as many people in 1994 *strongly* agreed with the statement. A full 29 percent of respondents who did not know a homosexual agreed with the statement in question 23 in 1996. This compares with over 60 percent of the officers who did not know homosexuals in 1994. These results suggest that, over time, all respondents are less likely to agree they are uncomfortable interacting with homosexuals.

**Table 8. Attitudes by Whether Respondent Knows a Homosexual: Comparison of Responses to Selected Questions from the 1994 and 1996 Surveys**

(Responses in Percent)								
23. I feel uncomfortable interacting with homosexuals.								
45. I know a homosexual	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96
yes	10	5	23	13	50	47	17	19
no	21	8	42	21	30	41	7	4
possibly	12	--	34	--	43	--	11	--

Table 9 shows a weighted index indicating an average response for each survey question.<sup>65</sup> The index is calculated on a scale ranging from 1, “strongly agree” to 4, “strongly disagree.” The index numbers for 1994 and 1996 surveys were compared and used to show the intensity of opinion held by respondents as well as directional changes in respondents’ opinions over time. The average response to question 23 by respondents who claimed to know a homosexual was 2.74 in 1994; this dropped to 2.48 in 1996. Over

<sup>65</sup> The weighted index was calculated by assigning a value to each response and multiplying the response frequency by the values, totaling the results for each question and dividing by 100. The following values were assigned to each response frequency: 1 was assigned to “strongly agree;” 2 equaled “agree;” 3 equaled “disagree;” and 4 was assigned to “strongly disagree.” For example, to calculate an average response for question 23, multiply 10 by 1; 23 by 2; 50 by 3; and 17 by 4. Then add the products of the multiplication together to get 274 and divide by 100 to get 2.74. On a 4 point scale, 2.74 is close to “disagree.”

time, respondents' average opinions appear to move to the middle of the scale, suggesting that, although they know homosexuals, their attitudes are less "set in stone." For people who did *not* know any homosexuals, the index number was 2.23 in 1994 and 1.89 in 1996 with regard to "feeling uncomfortable interacting with gays." This suggests that officers who have had no contact with homosexuals in the more recent survey feel a greater discomfort than their counterparts in the earlier survey group. This is interesting because most of the 1996 results move to the middle of the scale, not to one of the extremes. In question 30, the index numbers for the 1996 results decreased, compared with the earlier results, indicating that officers were less sure that going to a "gay bar" does not qualify as sexual misconduct.

**Table 9. Attitudes by Whether a Respondent Knows a Homosexual: Comparison of Weighted Index Numbers from the 1994 and 1996 Surveys**

Survey Question	Weighted Average of Response Frequencies				
	Yes		No		
	'94	'96	'94	'96	
45. I know a homosexual					
23. I feel uncomfortable interacting with gays	2.74	2.48	2.23	1.89	
30. Socializing in "gay bars" is sexual misconduct	3.03	2.94	3.13	2.74	

Note: Weighted average index was calculated on a 4 point scale. A score of 1= strongly agree and a score of 4 = strongly disagree.

**B. ARE ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY INTERPRETED DIFFERENTLY IN 1994 THAN IN 1996?**

This research question seeks to look past the language of the policy and understand how officers are likely to interpret it. The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy can be interpreted and applied in many different ways because of the way it is written and because officers' attitudes may color the way they understand it. This section seeks to

define how officers may interpret the policy by first comparing the 1996 and 1994 survey results to document changes in attitudes and interpretations over time. Additionally, the idea that officers' attitudes affect the way in which they view the policy is explored through written comments returned with the survey, and ideas expressed in the focus group interviews.

The grouping of questions in Table 10 examines the spirit of the policy and areas of possible differing interpretation. The responses from both the 1994 and 1996 survey groups to the questions included in this section were very similar, with one clear exception, the first question. Of the 1996 respondents, 66 percent indicated they agreed with the statement in question 1, "Full and open acceptance of homosexuals sends the wrong message to society." This is a decrease of 7 percentage points from the survey conducted in 1994.

**Table 10. Views of the Policy: Comparison of Responses (in percent) to Selected Questions from the 1994 and 1996 Surveys**

Survey Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96
1. Full acceptance of homosexuals sends the wrong message to society	53	43	20	23	19	25	8	9
2. I prefer to not have gays at my command	55	46	27	32	11	16	7	6
6. Senior uniformed leaders shaped the current policy	8	10	28	24	36	38	28	28
7. The policy is a positive step for the gay movement	17	14	50	48	23	29	10	9
14. I can easily determine a homosexual by appearance or mannerisms	2	2	9	8	58	60	30	30

A large majority (78 percent) of the 1996 respondents said they do not want homosexuals in their command (question 2). This is consistent with the literature on military opinion and the 1994 survey. It should be pointed out, however, that the magnitude of agreement with this position has decreased. In 1994, 55 percent of officers “strongly agreed” to not wanting gays in their command. In the 1996 sample, strong agreement fell by 9 percentage points to 46 percent, although it appears these officers will continue to interpret the policy conservatively. About 90 percent of respondents in both years indicated they cannot tell a person’s sexual orientation by appearance and mannerisms. Additionally, about two thirds of 1994 and 1996 survey respondents felt that the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was a positive step for the gay movement (question 7) and not the decision of senior military leadership (question 6). This indicates that many officers are not aware the policy quite clearly states that “homosexuality is incompatible with military service.”

As shown in Table 11, over 50 percent of the 1996 respondents felt the Navy's attitude toward homosexuals is more tolerant since the policy was implemented (question 42) and 56 percent believe the policy will eventually change to accept homosexuals (question 15). However, only 15 percent of the same respondents agreed that their own attitude toward homosexuals has become more tolerant since the policy was adopted. This suggests that officers may think DOD will eventually remove the ban completely. In one focus group interview, four officers stated that it was “just a matter of time” until homosexuals serve in the military unconditionally.

**Table 11. Views of the Policy: Tolerance Since the Policy Was Adopted, 1996 Survey**

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. The policy will eventually change to accept homosexuals	12	44	31	13
38. I have become more tolerant since the policy was adopted	1	14	57	28
42. Navy's attitude has become more tolerant since the policy was adopted	10	45	37	8

Written comments submitted voluntarily by the survey respondents showed a wide difference in views concerning “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in general. Over one-third of the written comments, a total of 43, were from respondents who said they did not like the policy or serving with homosexuals for the following reasons: moral (19 comments); privacy (13 comments ); loss of morale, good order and discipline (8 comments); and concern about sexual harassment and fraternization (3 comments).

A total of 17 respondents wrote comments indicating they think homosexuals should serve in the military without a ban. Eight officers wrote comments saying homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the military as long as they keep their orientation hidden. Another four officers said the issue has grown out of proportion and has received more attention than it is worth. Of these, two said the only “real problem” with homosexuals in the military is the response gay service members receive from their peers. Two other officers felt that homosexuals deserve equal treatment. Another commented that “we already serve with homosexuals,” and another expressed a similar

thought, adding that the current policy is just a step toward removing all restrictions on homosexuals in the military.

From these comments and survey results, it appears that most officers would interpret the policy very conservatively, because the majority of officers are opposed to homosexuality and fear that a homosexual in their unit would destroy the discipline and morale of the troops. However, to make these assumptions, we are missing the bigger picture. In the following sections, it can be seen that many officers actually do not interpret the policy conservatively because they are *unaware of what the policy means* and because officers have been trained to view their responsibilities as “mission first, people always.” In other words, they are likely to apply the policy within the context of their responsibilities and demands.

### **C. DO OFFICERS UNDERSTAND “DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL?”**

Both the survey and focus groups suggest that the majority of officers at NPS do not understand the current policy or how to implement it correctly. In fact, at the beginning of one interview session, the group wanted to review what the policy actually said and meant before answering any questions. Other officers were shocked when they were told that the policy clearly stated that “homosexuality was incompatible with military service,” because they thought the policy contradicted what it was supposedly trying to accomplish. For example, one participant said: “That statement you made earlier, that ‘homosexuality is incompatible with military service’ --is that an *actual* statement in the policy?” Another officer observed:

It seems like the policy itself is somewhat counterproductive because we are identifying a specific group. We are saying that people are different and we have to make special amends for them.

Moreover, the survey responses indicate that 70 percent of the respondents did not have a service member discharged for homosexuality from their last command, so most have not had the opportunity to implement it.

Table 12 shows respondents' level of understanding of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in 1996 and compares it with the level of understanding demonstrated by Navy officers in 1994. Overall, the responses to the questions are similar for the two groups, indicating that officers' understanding of the policy has not changed much over time.

As seen in Table 12, the responses to question 5 indicate that officers surveyed in 1996 were slightly more confident than officers in 1994 regarding their ability to distinguish between sexual conduct and sexual orientation--68 percent of the 1994 respondents compared with 75 percent of those in 1996. However, the vast majority of officers in both survey groups responded incorrectly to question 9-- "Lawful off-duty sexual activity is O.K."--since the policy makes no distinction between off-duty and on-duty conduct. Of the 1996 respondents, 65 percent disagreed with question 10, indicating they would not investigate reports of service members of the same sex holding hands. This is an increase of over 12 percentage points from the 53 percent of 1994 respondents who likewise disagreed. According to the policy directive, it is clearly the commander's responsibility to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, which may include holding hands as an indication of "misconduct."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> AmerInd, Incorporated, "Lessons Plan for the Department of Defense Policy on Homosexual Conduct," Alexandria, VA, 15 August 1995, p 1-3-3.



**Table 12. Understanding the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Policy: A Comparison of Responses (in percent) to Selected Questions from the 1994 and 1996 Surveys**

Survey Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96	'94	'96
5. I can distinguish between conduct and orientation	34	41	34	34	22	18	10	7
9. Lawful off-duty sexual activity is O.K.	29	26	41	45	16	18	14	11
10. I must investigate reports of same -sex hand holding	13	10	30	25	39	45	17	20
11. Gays disrupt good order and discipline	50	32	29	35	14	24	7	9
13. “Coming out” to a superior is sexual misconduct	9	10	17	22	53	46	21	22
22. Marching in gay parades shows orientation	16	13	24	26	48	51	12	10
30. Going to a “gay bar” is sexual misconduct	9	9	23	14	45	63	14	14

One third (33 percent) of the 1996 respondents disagreed with the statement in question 11-- “Gays disrupt good order and discipline”--an increase of 12 percentage points from the 1994 level of 21 percent. Additionally, in the 1996 survey, 68 percent of Navy officers disagreed with the statement in question 13-- “coming out” is equivalent to sexual misconduct--a decrease of 6 percentage points from the proportion disagreeing two years earlier. By admitting homosexual orientation, the service member is demonstrating intent to commit homosexual acts; therefore, admission is considered to be "proof" of homosexual conduct. According to the current DOD policy, service members must rebut this presumption to remain on active duty.<sup>67</sup> The fact that over half of the respondents in

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 2-2-7.

both groups incorrectly answered the question suggests that many officers have a very poor grasp of the policy.

Three officers interviewed during the focus group sessions did not realize that they were obligated to report a co-worker who admits to being homosexual. Four others openly admitted the policy was unclear to them. One participant asked: "If I found out he [my friend] is gay, am I under some obligation to divulge that information? . . . Who do they mean by 'don't tell?' Don't tell *who*?" Another interviewee was not confident that she could apply the policy correctly, because it can be interpreted in many different ways. She stated:

I can tell you from being a commanding officer, faced with a situation where I suddenly had information that people in my unit were gay, I was quite confused about what to do under this policy. I sought out all sorts of different legal opinions and went to my commanding officer and asked, "What do we do now, Marine?" figuring he'd say they're out. And even the opinions from legal officers differed on what we should do in the situation . . . To this day, I am not sure that what we did was right or wrong under this policy.

Table 12 compares the average responses from the 1994 and 1996 surveys. In question 6, the weighted index number was 3.28 in the 1994 survey, indicating that respondents disagreed with the statement, "I can distinguish between conduct and orientation." In the 1996 survey, the weighted index number was 1.91, indicating that respondents agreed, on average, with the same question. Thus, over the two years between surveys, the average response moved 1.37 points up the scale from "disagree" to "agree." The comments of officers in the interviews did not help to explain this dramatic change. Perhaps respondents have become over-confident in their abilities, since most (70 percent) are still inexperienced in applying the policy.

Although officers may say that they understand the difference between behavior and orientation in theory, at least one officer admitted in the focus group interviews that he was troubled by the fine distinction on a *practical* level. He thought homosexual orientation and behavior were indistinguishable, especially from the perspective of the enlisted troops. He observed:

The defense for Meinhold was that there is a fundamental difference between stating homosexual orientation and committing homosexual acts. Maybe you have to be a lawyer to understand the difference. I guess I can kind of see it, but, in my mind, I don't see how one or the other would have a different effect on the unit. Whether one guy says he has engaged in homosexual activity, or another guy says he thinks he is a homosexual--I don't know if there is going to be a different reaction [within the unit] . . . . I'm still not sure what the exact differences are substantively, nor how I would handle them as an officer.

In question 10--"I must investigate reports of same sex hand holding"--the weighted index number moved from 2.58 in 1994 to 2.75 in 1996--a slight move toward "disagree." The index number for question 11 regarding the disruption of good order and discipline was 1.78, suggesting "strong agreement" in 1994; and in 1996, it was 2.10, indicating "agreement." So, it appears by the change in the weighted index number in question 11, that respondents feel less strongly about the statement, "Gays disrupt good order and discipline."

In question 22--"Marching in gay parades shows sexual orientation"--the weighted index number moved one-half of a point, from 2.08 in 1994 to 2.58 in the 1996 results. In question 30--"Going to a gay bar is sexual misconduct"--the weighted index number was 2.46 in 1994 and 2.82 in 1996, indicating a slight shift toward "disagree."

**Table 13. Understanding the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Policy: Weighted Index Scale**

Survey Question	1994	1996
5. I can distinguish between conduct and orientation	3.28	1.91
9. Lawful off-duty sexual activity is O.K.	2.15	2.14
10. I must investigate reports of same -sex hand holding	2.58	2.75
11. Gays disrupt good order and discipline	1.78	2.10
13. “Coming out” to a superior is sexual misconduct	2.86	2.80
22. Marching in gay parades shows orientation	2.08	2.58
30. Going to a “gay bar” is sexual misconduct	2.46	2.82

Note: Weighted average index was calculated on a 4 point scale. a score of 1= strongly agree and a score of 4 = strongly disagree.

From these slight changes in the index numbers, it appears that respondents are becoming more *unsure* of their answers. In the majority of responses presented in Table 13, the index numbers are between 2 and 3, suggesting that respondents in both survey groups neither “agree” nor “disagree.” Charting the movement of opinion from 1994 results to 1996 results, the average response moves closer to the middle of the scale, perhaps implying a higher level of uncertainty. The researcher expected that, if the officers felt they understood the policy, they would mark “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree” on their survey sheets. The exceptions to this trend are question 6, which was previously discussed, and question 30.

One observation frequently offered by respondents in comments added to the survey forms was that the survey questions generally asked for respondents’ *opinions* rather than facts. For example, question 9--“Lawful, off duty sexual conduct is of no

concern to me"--troubled some respondents because their opinion was not consistent with what they thought the policy said, and because they did not know if the term "lawful" implied "consensual." Of the 104 written comments submitted with the surveys, 29 did not like the survey because they felt it did not provide an "undecided" or "don't know" option. Many said they sometimes agreed with part of a statement and disagreed with the another part, and they did not like being "forced" to choose a definite answer. In light of these comments, and the fact there has been little training on the current policy, it was difficult to determine reasons for certain trends in responses to questions testing Navy officers' understanding of the policy. For example, does the fact that virtually the same proportion of officers who agreed with question 9 in 1994 as in 1996 show a consistent level of misunderstanding concerning the policy, or does it show something else?

**D. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"?**

Before conducting the interviews, it was hypothesized that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" may have some unintended consequences, because it assumes that homosexuality is incompatible with military service and because the policy may not reflect the views of the military-at-large. Three questions were used in the focus group interviews to guide discussion about the implications of the policy:

\* The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy states that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service." Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

\* When the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was implemented, it was viewed as a compromise between lifting the ban and discriminating against homosexuals. Many senior

leaders in the military were adamantly opposed to lifting the ban. Do you think their opposition accurately reflects the views of the military-at-large?

\* If you suspected a person in your unit was gay, would you avoid that person because you don't want to be in a position of having to turn them in?

### **1. Is homosexuality compatible with military service?**

Both the previous and current policy state that homosexuality is incompatible with military service. Nevertheless, the interviewees were clearly divided with respect to this position. Out of 29 participants who answered the question, sixteen felt that homosexuality *was compatible* with military service. One participant said, "Swearing before your creator that you are going to support and defend the Constitution is a darn good equalizer." Another said that homosexuality does not make a person less capable or less committed. Others felt that homosexuals should serve in non-deployable units where assignments may be more like civilian jobs.

Of the thirteen interviewees who said homosexuality is *not* compatible with military service, privacy was the number-one reason, followed by a concern about harassment. One officer claimed homosexuality is not compatible with military service because leadership is not willing to force tolerance. Five officers said that homosexuality was not compatible with military service because society was not ready for it.

In every interview, the topic of compatibility with military service was discussed indirectly. Some of the interviewees indicated that working with a known homosexual would impair their own work performance, due to their concern about sexual harassment and privacy issues. In other words, the homosexual could be totally professional and

capable on the job, but the performance of *heterosexuals around that person* would not be the same. As one officer said:

I think it [a homosexual's job performance] becomes irrelevant because the question is not necessarily how is the homosexual doing his job. The question is, how are people around him going to be able to do their job because of their knowledge of him?

When people discussed "real situations," the homosexuals they knew were often seen as compatible with the Navy, and they were proud to have served with them. Several people told stories about service members who were accidentally revealed to be homosexuals. Their units depended on them and their expertise, so they were not discharged under the policy. The leadership usually focused on the individual's professional abilities and ignored the allegation that the service member may not be heterosexual. One interviewee related the following story:

SK3 Xxx is in his rack, we're in a liberty port. SK3 Yyy comes off liberty-trashed. He is drunk out of his bloody mind. He crawls into Xxx's rack and starts pulling Xxx's shorts down . . . . To this day, I'm not sure but, but I think Yyy is a homosexual. But I did not pursue having him removed from Naval service because he was a good storekeeper and he got along well with the guys even after the incident . . . . The fact that we were only 50 percent manned, may have something to do with it, but I wasn't willing to give the guy up. He was a good storekeeper, he had a lot of potential, and if he keeps his homosexuality under his hat, he'll go far, and he'll do well. He'll make a contribution to the Navy.

Another, similar story involved an officer. The interviewee served with the officer at a shore-based command, and he had recently heard about his friend's experience at sea.

He said:

We were shore-based. The guy was suspected to be gay. I don't think it affected cohesion at all. I know, at sea recently, this is how it came out. Apparently, someone discovered he was writing a letter to someone, and it wasn't a woman, and it was a pretty affectionate letter. And they posted it in the ready room. His squadron already suspected it, but the skipper took

the letter and presented it to this guy and said, “Hey, we’ll consider this an ‘I didn’t ask, you didn’t tell.’” And he was actually permitted to stay in the Navy because, I think, he was a superior performer.

Four participants also shared stories about service members who were homosexuals and who did something wrong or annoying. Instead of recognizing the behavior of the individual as undesirable, they could only see the homosexuality as undesirable. It was as if some participants could not see the person as anything but homosexual--even if the behavior had nothing to do with the sexuality.

Other interviewees related incidents of reluctantly advising their best performers to leave the Navy on the grounds that the culture of the military, and hiding their homosexuality, would place overwhelming demands on them. For example, as an officer related:

I had an individual who was my top E-5, walked on water, sailor . . . . He came to me . . . and said he needed to be straight with me about why he was having financial difficulties. And he said he was gay and he was being blackmailed by a former lover. . . . He said he loved the Navy, he didn’t want to get out the Navy, but he realized his finances were being tremendously affected and he already had a night job and he couldn’t work any harder. . . . I asked him, “Do you intend to be gay? and continue to act gay?” [He said,] “Yes.” So, ultimately he was going to be discharged for being gay. . . . And I can only tell you that there was great sorrow and sadness at the command for losing this top sailor who was a wonderful person with a great personality.

These stories illustrate a very real incongruity between what officers say about homosexuals or compatibility and what actually happens. On the one hand, many officers claim to foresee very dire consequences if homosexuals are allowed to serve openly in the military. On the other hand, numerous stories surfaced about officers who “look the other way” to accommodate good performers who are also homosexual.



## 2. Does the policy reflect the views of the military-at-large?

Most officers interviewed thought that the opinions of senior military leaders who convened the Military Working Group (which studied the issue of homosexuals in the military and recommended the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy) were in touch with the predominant views of service members. In fact, fourteen out of eighteen participants agreed that the current policy accurately reflects the views of the military at large. One person agreed with the question because, in his mind, officers do not need to have another “problem child” in their divisions and departments.

Another officer said that the senior military leaders earned their positions because of their experiences, and they understood that a total reversal of the policy at that time would disrupt the services. One interviewee offered a very different view:

Yes, I think among the 18 to 22 year olds you see a lot more tolerance. I would say the junior enlisted probably show more tolerance, but among the junior officers I would think there’s probably a lot less tolerance. I think youngsters today just feel that, “O.K., you can do that, and that is O.K. with me. Just don’t bother me, because I’m going to do my thing and I won’t bother you.” I think some of the folks that went to college, or the Academy, to ROTC training or wherever they went, have more of a sense of, “This is right, this isn’t right.” And maybe a stronger moral compass. Not that I think necessarily think that homosexuality is immoral, but I think that in our society today, a lot of people view it that way. . . .Yes, I think they were reflective of the predominant view.

Of the four interviewees who disagreed, two felt that the senior leadership’s view was based on fear and a “generational mindset.” Another felt that many military leaders personally disagreed with the policy, but publicly promoted it for political reasons. Another interviewee disagreed on the grounds that peer pressure and attitudes set at the

top carry junior service members who are undecided or unconcerned with the issue. She stated:

The reason you have this force against homosexuals is in large part because it is expected of males and people in the fleet to be less tolerant, and they sort of engender that feeling. If you were in a group of sailors on board a ship and you didn't think it was a big deal, but everybody was making a big deal of it, there is this peer pressure effect. . .and joining the bandwagon of antagonism or hatred toward them.

Most officers interviewed agreed that the policy is in keeping with the military's culture. Even those who disliked the policy admitted that peer pressure carries the attitudes of service members who are undecided about the issue of homosexuals in the military.

### **3. Does the policy interfere with human interaction?**

The researcher hypothesized that some people would avoid contact with other service members they suspected of being homosexual because of the burden placed upon them as "gatekeeper" for enforcing the policy. Some interviewees agreed that this was a possibility; but, at least six officers thought the policy also caused other, more compelling, problems. Three said the policy conflicted with the Navy's core values of courage, honor, and commitment, because homosexuals had to hide a part of who they are. Additionally, because homosexuals cannot be honest about their relationships, many support services frequently used by heterosexual couples are unavailable to them. One participant said:

It [the current policy] bred dishonesty that is not compatible with what we are trying to hold up as some of our three core values. That's the part that bothers me more than anything. It's basically saying, "We don't care what you do, or how you are, as long as you just don't tell us. . . ." You have abuse between people in a heterosexual relationship. You also have those problems between homosexuals in a relationship. Now that person can't even come to you for support, and ask for help, counseling, whatever. You are not there to support them, and they cannot rely on you

the way every other heterosexual in the Navy can. The support systems are not there for them at all. There is no family counseling for them. There is no relationship counseling. There is no financial counseling for how to bring these two people together and make their finances work--and we know we have men and wives who have these kinds of problems. . . . If they wanted to reduce the risk of AIDS and ask some very pertinent questions about how to best avoid AIDS, they cannot even ask those questions.

Another interviewee told the group about an experience where a few enlisted personnel in the unit were identified by the local press as “most likely gay,” and they were not discharged because they did not violate the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. She said:

When it came out that [people in my unit] were “most likely gay”--it tended to make them feel more at ease, more relaxed, and more able to talk about weekends, and things like that, among their peers. I would have to agree that what we saw happen was better unit cohesion, once it was known.

Although officers are not concerned about sailors accidentally or deliberately revealing their sexual orientation on-the-job, the two anecdotes illustrate how the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy isolates service members from community support and services that most military members enjoy.

It appears that many interviewees do not agree with the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy’s basic assumption that “homosexuality is incompatible with military service”; however, they believe that the military-at-large agrees with it. When officers were faced with a homosexual in their unit, they tried to balance the needs of the work center against the needs of the individual. Their stories indicate they will consider turning a blind eye to the policy to retain good performers who are also homosexual. In effect, the policy’s real implication is that it is selectively followed, and the “gatekeeper’s” discretionary

judgment is encouraged by the policy's confusing wording and potential for misunderstanding.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. CONCLUSIONS

The data gathered in this study revealed three key findings that were also highlighted in the 1994 study: 1) demographic factors are apparently unrelated to certain attitudes of Naval officers at NPS; 2) many misperceptions exist concerning applications of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”; and 3) there is considerable disagreement over the policy’s basic assumption and justification of a homosexual’s “incompatibility with military service.” These key points are discussed below.

First, no statistically significant differences were found in attitudes toward homosexuals based on a Naval officer’s gender, racial/ethnic group, or longevity in service. Attitudes and opinions expressed on the survey of Naval officers were generally negative, across the board, regarding homosexuals in the military. Nevertheless, officers who said that they *knew* a homosexual were statistically more likely than others to hold favorable views of homosexuals on a number of survey questions. This finding tends to support the “contact theory,” which states that one’s impressions or attitudes toward a group are influenced by levels of personal contact with members of that group. Additionally, it appears that both women and men are becoming somewhat more tolerant with respect to homosexuals. For example, proportionally fewer men in 1996 than in 1994 agreed with the statement, “I would have no difficulty obeying orders to work with a gay co-worker” (61 percent in 1996 compared with 46 percent in 1994); and proportionally fewer women claimed in 1996 than in 1994 that they would prefer not to

have homosexuals in their command (48 percent in 1996 compared with 60 percent in 1994).

Despite the apparent softening of attitudes, most officers in the 1996 survey (77 percent) still did not want to serve with open homosexuals. A variety of reasons were offered for their objections, most revolving around the issues of privacy, sexual harassment, and the perception that a homosexual's presence would result in the downfall of good order and discipline. In fact, 66 percent of the officers surveyed in 1996 agreed that homosexuals would adversely affect "good order and discipline."

A related finding is an acknowledgment among officers that attitudes toward homosexuals are changing, and this trend may have an important effect on future policy decisions concerning homosexuals and military service. Fifty-five percent of the officers surveyed felt that the Navy's attitude has softened since the current policy was adopted; and 56 percent of officers agreed that it is only a matter of time until military policy is changed to full and open acceptance of homosexuals. At the same time, several officers who were interviewed in focus groups believe that DOD will eventually remove all restrictions on homosexuals in the military.

A second key finding is that officers are even more uncertain in 1996 than in 1994 about basic elements of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. The 1996 interviewees related stories about how difficult it was to apply the policy in actual situations and how they were never certain that they followed the policy correctly. Others were surprised by the policy's assumptions and found them contradictory to what they thought the policy was actually trying to accomplish. Moreover, the 1996 survey indicated that respondents

were unsure of their interpretations of the policy. The average responses to questions about the policy fell in the 2.5 range on a four-point scale of agreement or disagreement, indicating a fair amount of uncertainty. In addition, over 60 percent of officers surveyed in 1996 answered two of the policy questions *incorrectly*. Sixty-eight percent did not agree (incorrectly) that “coming out” to a superior qualified as sexual misconduct under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy; and 65 percent did not think (incorrectly) that Commanding Officers needed to investigate reports of same-sex hand-holding. Further, almost 40 percent of the officers thought that marching in a “gay pride” parade indicates a service member’s sexual *orientation* (which the policy calls *behavior*). It is clear from these results that officers have a poor grasp of the policy.

Anecdotes from the focus group interviews suggest that officers are likely to interpret the policy in the context of their responsibilities and demands. If the homosexual is a good performer and does not cause problems in the unit, the officer will probably turn a blind eye to the person’s homosexuality. Conversely, if the service member is not a good performer or could use their homosexuality to disrupt the unit, officers say they will interpret the policy in a way that will facilitate removing the “problem sailor.”

The third key finding is that many of the officers interviewed did not agree with the basic premise of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”—that is, “homosexuality is incompatible with military service.” A total of 16 out of 29 officers who took part in the focus group interviews said that they disagreed with the statement because sexual orientation is unrelated to professional capability or commitment.

In general, it is clear that most officers hold negative opinions about serving with homosexuals. There is some softening in the strength of these opinions between 1994 and 1996. This apparent softening may correlate with the belief that the Navy has become more tolerant and that the military's barriers to homosexuals will eventually be removed.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The increasing confusion as to what the policy says and how it should be interpreted must be addressed during officer training and through Navy Rights and Responsibilities (NR&R) training, which is already given on a yearly basis. Such training is important to ensure a more evenhanded approach in dealing with homosexuals. Use of the policy as a tool to root-out "troublemakers" and keep the "superstars" may be pragmatic, as several officers noted in the interviews, but it does not allow for the fair and equal treatment of all homosexual service members.

As more junior officers are trained in applying the policy and more service members are brought up to speed during their yearly training, periodic reviews should be made of officer perceptions and understanding of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Baseline data from both the 1994 and 1996 surveys can be used to evaluate the growing acceptance of homosexuals in the military and understanding of the policy concerning their service. As more data are accumulated, the training, and even the wording of the policy, can be altered to accommodate changes in officers' attitudes as well as of changing force needs and public attitudes.

Future research could assess the performance of persons discharged from the military under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Performance indicators could include



yearly evaluations, awards, advancement (such as time to promotion or recognition for early promotion), training for skill qualification, and so on. This type of study could assist defense officials and Congress in determining the consequences of current or future policies regarding the military service of homosexuals. It may also clarify the controversial premise that homosexuality is “incompatible with military service.”



## APPENDIX A. SURVEY AND RESPONSE FREQUENCIES

Response frequencies to the 1994 survey are shown the top line.  
 Response frequencies for the 1996 survey are shown in bold print below  
 the 1994 results.

(1) strongly agree    (2) agree    (3) disagree    (4) strongly disagree

1. Full and open acceptance of homosexuals in the military sends the wrong message to the rest of society.

52.9%	20.0%	18.8%	8.3%
<b>43.1%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>

2. I would prefer not to have homosexuals in my command.

55.5%	26.7%	11.2%	6.6%
<b>46.1%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

3. Homosexuals are probably born that way.

8.8%	23.8%	38.5%	28.9%
<b>10.3%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>36.4%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>

4. Homosexual orientation is learned through social interaction and can be changed by will.

19.7%	32.0%	36.8%	11.5%
<b>12.9%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>

5. The difference between sexual conduct and sexual orientation are clearly defined and I can distinguish between the two.

33.9%	33.6%	22.0%	10.5%
<b>40.7%</b>	<b>34.4%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

6. Our most senior uniformed military leaders shaped the present policy.

8.0%	28.4%	35.6%	28.0%
<b>10.0%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>27.8%</b>

7. The current policy is a positive step for the gay movement.

16.7%	50.0%	23.3%	10.0%
<b>14.5%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>29.3%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>

8. I would have no difficulty working for a homosexual Commanding Officer.

10.0%	20.4%	24.8%	44.8%
<b>8.3%</b>	<b>28.9%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>34.2%</b>

9. Lawful off-duty sexual activity would be of no consequence to me.

29.3%	40.7%	16.0%	14.0%
<b>26.4%</b>	<b>45.2%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>

10. As a department head, you receive a report from Seaman Smith that Airman Jones was holding hands with the same sex civilian in a movie theater. It is your responsibility to investigate this activity.

13.4%	30.4%	39.2%	17.0%
<b>10.4%</b>	<b>25.1%</b>	<b>45.2%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>

11. Allowing homosexual personnel within the Navy can cause the downfall of good order and discipline.

49.5%	29.3%	14.0%	7.0%
<b>31.9%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>

12. Homosexuality is a medical/psychological anomaly that can be changed to heterosexual preference through treatment.

9.3%	21.3%	45.0%	24.4%
<b>6.8%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>48.6%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>

13. If a service member tells a superior that he or she has a homosexual orientation, this is equivalent to sexual misconduct.

9.4%	17.3%	52.7%	20.6%
<b>10.0%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>21.9%</b>

14. I can easily determine whether or not someone is homosexual by appearance and mannerisms.

1.4%	9.4%	58.5%	30.7%
<b>1.7%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>59.9%</b>	<b>30.4%</b>

15. It is just a matter of time until military policy is changed to full and open acceptance of homosexuals.

11.9%	36.6%	34.4%	17.2%
<b>12.2%</b>	<b>44.2%</b>	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>

16. Homosexuals can be trusted with secret military documents.

19.6%	50.8%	20.2%	9.4%
<b>22.1%</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>

17. The current policy protects the rights of all sailors regardless of sexual orientation.

6.5%	29.0%	41.9%	22.6%
<b>6.8%</b>	<b>43.6%</b>	<b>34.8%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>

18. Under the current policy, heterosexuals aboard ships are at greater risk of having their privacy invaded by homosexuals.

23.8%	38.0%	29.0%	9.2%
<b>18.0%</b>	<b>32.7%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>

19. Homosexuals are more likely to suffer emotional problems in a military setting.

24.45	41.7%	27.8%	6.1%
<b>20.2%</b>	<b>42.8%</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

20. The current policy is good for national defense.

2.6%	15.4%	36.4%	45.6%
<b>4.7%</b>	<b>24.9%</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>

21. People are either heterosexually or homosexually oriented.

9.8%	30.8%	47.7%	11.7%
<b>8.4%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>

22. Marching in "Gay Parades" demonstrates homosexual orientation.

15.8%	23.7%	48.0%	12.5%
<b>12.9%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>

23. I feel uncomfortable in the presence of homosexuals and have difficulty interacting normally with them.

17.8%	40.0%	34.7%	7.5%
<b>10.3%</b>	<b>33.9%</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>

24. A division officer's sexual preference has no effect on the officer's ability to lead.

11.9%	26.4%	32.5%	29.2%
<b>12.9%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>

25. The current policy will have more impact on the enlisted members than on the officers.

16.4%	25.8%	39.7%	18.1%
<b>8.4%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>

26. Homosexuals should not be restricted from serving anywhere in the Navy.

9.9%	14.7%	24.9%	50.5%
<b>10.6%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>33.1%</b>

27. Religious teachings provide the only real obstacles to total acceptance of gays in the Navy.

4.5%	5.4%	34.3%	55.8%
<b>2.7%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	<b>47.8%</b>

28. Civilian homosexuals are of no consequence to me.

16.0%	39.4%	31.2%	13.4%
<b>14.0%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>

29. I would not want a gay person as a neighbor.

16.2%	28.9%	41.1%	13.8%
<b>11.4%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>47.8%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>

30. Service members who socialize in "gay bars" are engaging in sexual misconduct.

9.1%	22.6%	53.8%	14.5%
<b>9.0%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>63.1%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

31. Heterosexual orientation is an inherited trait.  
 15.2%      32.3%      37.3%      15.2%  
**13.2%**      **28.0%**      **44.6%**      **14.2%**

32. I would have no difficulty obeying an order from the Commanding Officer to work with a homosexual co-worker on a difficult/dangerous assignment.  
 14.3%      35.4%      30.2%      20.1%  
**16.6%**      **45.0%**      **27.8%**      **10.6%**

33. Homosexuals and heterosexuals should have equal rights.  
 20.3%      40.2%      21.5%      18.0%  
**23.3%**      **43.9%**      **15.9%**      **16.9%**

34. Homosexuals could pose a health risk to the Navy.  
 37.0%      37.0%      20.1%      5.9%  
**25.8%**      **39.6%**      **27.2%**      **7.4%**

35. Compared with my peers, I consider myself more tolerant on the issue of homosexuals in the military.  
 15.9%      40.2%      34.6%      9.3%  
**15.7%**      **48.5%**      **31.4%**      **4.4%**

36. The current policy will have more impact on women than on men.  
 3.5%      6.1%      67.8%      22.6%  
**1.4%**      **6.8%**      **71.1%**      **20.7%**

37. On the whole, I like the current policy better than the old policy.  
 4.7%      18.6%      30.8%      45.9%  
**2.8%**      **27.0%**      **36.7%**      **33.6%**

38. My attitude toward homosexuals has become more tolerant since the current policy was adopted.  
 1.4%      14.2%      56.8%      27.7%

39. The number of service members discharged for homosexuality from my last command was:

(1) None	(2) 1	(3) 2	(4) 3	(5) More Than Three
70.5%	14.4%	6.7%	3.4%	5.0%

40. The current policy has the effect of encouraging homosexuals to make unwanted sexual advances.

5.2%	8.3%	64.7%	21.8%
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41. A homosexual's safety or life could be in danger due to beliefs held by other service members.

26.8%	58.7%	12.4%	2.0%
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42. The Navy's attitude toward homosexuality has become more tolerant since the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was implemented.

10.4%	45.1%	36.7%	7.7%
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43. If homosexuals were allowed to serve openly in the Navy, I would resign my commission.

9.4%	10.4%	54.7%	25.5%
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44. The presence of a homosexual in my unit would interfere with mission accomplishment.

17.7%	33.0%	35.4%	13.9%
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\*\*\*\* Because people tend to answer questions differently, we would like to ask you some questions about yourself. Again, this information will only be used in aggregate form.

45. I have a friend or relative who is homosexual.

(1) yes	(2) no	(3) possibly
28.5%	51.8%	18.9%
46.1%	53.8%	N/A



46. How many years have you been in the Navy?

(1) 2-5	(2) 6-9	(3) 10-12	(4) 13-15	(5) 16-20
8.8%	43.2%	26.6%	13.6%	7.8%
<b>6.4%</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

47. I am (1) male (2) female

89.3%	10.7%
<b>91.3%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>

48. My race/ethnicity is: (1) Hispanic (2) Black (3) White (4) Other

6.3%	4.6%	83.3%	5.7%
<b>3.7%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>84.8%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>

49. Service community: (1) Surface (2) Aviator (3) Subs

23.8%	24.8%	10.0%
<b>11.4%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

50. (1) R. Line (2) Supply (3) Fleet Support (4) Unknown

15.2%	8.9%	10.4%	6.7%
<b>23.5%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>



# APPENDIX B. SURVEY SCANTRON SHEET

00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00

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## **APPENDIX C. PROTOCOL FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY, UNIT COHESION AND THE “DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL” POLICY**

### **Interviewers:**

Terry Rea  
Margaret Friery

### **Introduction:**

Welcome and thank you for participating in this focus group interview. Some of you responded to an e-mail request to participate in group interviews to help us define naval officers attitudes about homosexuality, military service and the current DOD policy called “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Your names were randomly selected from a list generated by the Registrar’s Office. Others indicated you were willing to participate in interviews when you filled out a survey several months ago. In either event, we are happy to have you participate in our interview today. We understand that you are busy people and we will try to be as expeditious as possible.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this interview is to help us explore unit cohesion in light of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, which excludes known homosexuals from the U.S. military. We will be conducting several interviews with other students and will be analyzing trends and perceptions of Navy officers who are students here at NPS. Additionally, we expect to interview former Navy members who have been discharged from the Navy for being homosexual.

We are conducting this analysis as a portion of research for our thesis. Terry’s thesis focuses on homosexuality and unit cohesion and mine is about officer’s perceptions of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Policy.” There are several goals that we want to achieve during this time. They include:

1. We want to “sanity-check” the literature on unit cohesion and homosexuality.
2. We want to increase our own objectivity towards these issues.
3. We want to understand how the presence of a homosexual in your unit may have affected cohesion, morale and mission accomplishment.
4. We want to know if the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy has affected the way you interact with people you perceive to be homosexual.

Although we’re confident that many of you have strong opinions and beliefs about homosexuality and religious views and morality, we are asking that the discussion today not focus on whether homosexuality behavior is “right” or “wrong” -- “normal” or “abnormal”. While that topic is an interesting one, it is not within the scope of our research. Please, while you participate in today’s discussion, try to discuss the relationship between homosexuals serving in the military and unit cohesion.

Your participation is completely confidential and no one will be told who participated in the interviews, and although we will be using specific comments and opinions you may express, we will not identify you by name. Additionally, we ask for confidentiality among members of this group. In other words, what you hear here stays in here. We hope that this promise of confidentiality will help you feel free to express your honest opinions.

We are asking you to give us some demographic data and some basic attitude data on these mini-surveys. Our intent here is to be able to document that we interviewed individuals from a wide range of the Navy Officer population, and that we interviewed individuals with a wide range of attitudes regarding the topic. Again, these surveys are confidential and you will not be identified.

### **Background:**

Before we begin with the interview, we want to review some important terms and assumptions so that we are clear in our terminology. The terms are unit cohesion, the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, homosexual behavior and homosexual orientation.

Unit cohesion is a bonding to promote and sustain the will and commitment of group members to each other, the group itself and the mission. We assume that unit cohesion is necessary to varying degrees in military units.

The “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy is the current DOD policy that states homosexuality is not compatible with military service. Service members are never asked about their sexual orientation; however, they can be discharged if they reveal they are homosexual through behavior or statements. Under this policy, individual performance is not considered. In other words, if a person is found to be a homosexual, then he or she is discharged regardless of past accomplishments or performance.

Homosexual behavior is defined as commission or intent to commit homosexual acts. Homosexual orientation is when someone is physically and or emotionally attracted to members of the same sex. Under the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy, an individual may be discharged for stating his/her homosexual orientation, even if no homosexual acts have been committed.

### **Guidelines:**

There are a few guidelines we’d like to ask you to follow during the focus group interview.

First, you do not need to speak in any particular order. When you have something to say, please do so.

Second, please do not speak while someone else is talking. It will be difficult for us to record your opinions if more than one person is speaking at a time.

Third, please remember that there are several people in the group and that it is important that we obtain the point of view of each one of you. You do not need to agree with everyone or anyone in the group; the group is not expected to reach a consensus.

Fourth, we would like to focus on your own opinions, and would like to avoid your interpretation of how your other classmates might answer our questions.

Finally, we are not here to discuss whether homosexuality is right or wrong. We are here to learn about your attitudes towards homosexuals, unit cohesion and the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. We are also interested in understanding how your attitudes towards homosexuals have changed due to your personal experiences.

Do you have any questions about how we will be proceeding with the focus group?

Then let’s get started.

### **Warm-up:**

#### 1. What Makes a Unit Cohesive?

What makes a unit cohesive? Is it culture, attitudes, behavior?

Can a diverse group be cohesive?

What factors will increase or decrease cohesion?

### **Research Questions:**

#### 2. Unit Cohesion Prior to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

Prior to the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, applicants and recruits were asked to reveal their sexual orientation. Literature about the previous policy suggests that service members were relatively certain that shipmates were heterosexual.

Is it correct to assume that an individual knew of his/her sexual orientation at the time of enlistment?

Is it correct to assume that an individual was truthful about his/her sexual orientation when asked?

#### 3. Unit Cohesion if the Group “Doesn’t Know”

If the group does not know a member of the unit is gay, is unit cohesion affected? Why, or why not?

How is it different from prior to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell?”

How is working with a perceived homosexual different from working with an actual homosexual?

#### 4. Unit Cohesion if the Group “Finds Out”

How is unit cohesion affected if the group “finds out?” Has anything changed?  
How have any of your past commands been affected by a “coming out?”  
Has your opinion changed since you knew or had worked with a homosexual?  
How?

#### 5. Behavior Versus Orientation

Do homosexual behavior and homosexual orientation affect unit cohesion in the same manner? What are the similarities or differences? Why?

#### 6. Policy Review

Is homosexuality incompatible with military service?  
Do homosexuals jeopardize unit cohesion?  
-by behavior or orientation?  
-does it make a difference if the behavior is between two consenting adults?  
-does it make a difference if the behavior is private?  
Is it possible that the policy itself causes a unit cohesion problem?

7. When the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was implemented, it was viewed as a compromise between lifting the ban, and discriminating against homosexuals. Many senior military leaders were adamantly opposed to lifting the ban. Do you think that their opposition accurately reflects the views of the military at large?

#### **Wrap-up:**

I’d like to ask now, if any of you have any other opinions about the topics discussed that you think are relevant to our analysis, and that we haven’t already discussed.

I understand that you do not all agree on each point, but have I accurately recorded the opinions that you individually hold?

If you have some comments or opinions that you weren’t comfortable addressing in a group environment, please let me know after this session, and we’ll try to arrange to meet privately.

#### **Closing:**

As we come to a close, I need to remind each of you that your comments and opinions may be used in our theses. Your identities, though, will remain anonymous. We



ask that you refrain from discussing the comments of group members and that you respect the right of each member to remain anonymous. Are there any questions I can answer?

Thank you for your contribution to this project. This was a very successful interview and your honest and forthright responses will be an enormous asset to our work. Again, we appreciate your involvement very much. Thank you.



## APPENDIX D. PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

To validate our interviews, we must have a record to show that the participants came from varied backgrounds and opinions. Please fill out the following questionnaire as honestly as you can. The information provided here will only be used in aggregate form and no attempt will be made to match this information to individuals or opinions expressed in the interview.

Thank you for your time and patience.

1. I am (a) male (b) female
2. My race/ethnicity is: (a) white (b) black (c) Hispanic (d) other
3. Service Community: \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. How many years do you have in the Navy? \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. I have a friend or relative who is a homosexual (a) yes (b) no.

**Answer the following questions on the ten point scale.**

6. On the issue of homosexuality, I am more tolerant than my peers.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 strongly agree

7. On the whole, I like the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy better than the previous policy.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 strongly agree

8. Allowing homosexuals in the Navy can cause the downfall of good order and discipline.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 strongly agree

9. Under the current policy, heterosexuals aboard ships are at greater risk of having their privacy invaded by homosexuals.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 strongly agree

10. The presence of a homosexual in my unit would interfere with unit accomplishment.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 strongly agree

*[The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible.]*

## APPENDIX E. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

November 1, 1996

Unit Cohesion and Homosexuality  
Naval Postgraduate School

Q. Does homosexuality affect unit cohesion? And if it does, how does it?

A. I think it does. I think there are a couple things. First of all, there's homophobia. So there are going to be people in the squadron, or whatever outfit, who will object just based on the fact that the person's a homosexual. I think that there is a second factor, and that is that if there are multiple homosexuals in a unit, then you have sexual tension arise in the unit. To be honest with you, in my squadron we had no homosexuals that I was aware of, and there was a unit cohesion. It was something I'd never seen before, a purely male dynamic and it was awesome. I think that if we had introduced sexual tension of any kind, whether it's heterosexual or homosexual, it would have degraded the unit cohesion that we had. And I think that if we had multiple homosexuals--for me personally, if it was a single homosexual I wouldn't have had any problem--there would have been some guys in the squadron who would have had a problem--but if there were multiple homosexuals, sexual tension would arise between members of the squadron, and I think that would adversely affect unit cohesion.

Q. In the same way as bringing females into the squadron? Are you saying you'd have the same kind of sexual tension?

A. Yes. I believe so.

B. I believe that it would adversely affect cohesion in that it would detract from focus on the mission. Focus on a vision, or a mission, in my experience is a key element. I've worked in integrated units and, as far as the gender thing goes, I've seen shitbirds of both genders, and I've seen stars of both genders, that doesn't concern me. What concerns me is, like you mentioned, there's a sexual tension dynamic. These guys who have to live together, and shower together, and work together, are concerned, and as they should be, that while they're in the shower, someone's checking out their gear. Then that detracts from focus on the mission. It's the same reason that we don't berth men and women together. And they don't share shower facilities. The most noble and high-minded officers and enlisted personnel, in a perfect world, would be able to say, "I'm not really looking at you, even though you're standing there naked next to me". That's not reality, though. Reality is that if I know the guy in the stall next to me is homosexual, then if he looks at me in those situations, and he's going to, then I have a reasonable fear that he is looking at me, not as a shipmate, but as a sexual object. And I have personal experience with homosexuals that confirm that particular point of view. You absolutely cannot have that sexual tension in a unit which lives together in such tight quarters. You just cannot take away that focus on the mission. And introducing homosexuals, known homosexuals, introduces that idea of stress.

Q. What about not known homosexuals--someone who is keeping their homosexuality a secret?

B. Let me put it this way. Suppose you're on a ship and you're in a shower. I'm in the next stall. Would you be concerned? Probably you would be concerned if there were two or three other guys in the shower. If three guys come out of the shower, they're going to be checking you out.

A. But if they're not known homosexuals?

B. If the guy in the shower stall next to me is not a known homosexual, then it doesn't come into my mind that he may be looking at me as a sexual object.

Q. Under today's policy, the military is saying "we acknowledge that there are homosexuals in the military--as long as they keep it secret, it's okay." So, do you still have the same feeling in the shower?

B. Yes. Because once you say it's okay to manifest the behavior, then that behavior becomes overt. And once that behavior becomes overt, then it becomes an everyday part of your life and will definitely distract from focus on the mission.

Q. Okay. Does anyone else have something to add?

C. From a purely mission-oriented standpoint, I think you're introducing one more thing to worry about into an already stressful situation. I think that's kind of a summary of what you're saying.

D. I think there's another dimension, and that's the fact that, for me personally, I think a homosexual has a serious lack of judgment. I mean, I think that your sexuality goes to the very base of your person, and I think if I can't trust someone to make the right decision about sex, I don't want to trust that person to make the right decision about my life. To me, that goes down to the very heart of a person, and that's one of the most debase issues I can think of, so there's a trust issue. I don't trust a homosexual to make decisions about human lives because I can't trust them to make formal decisions about everyday life.

A. Just to represent that there are many people in the military, myself included, who disagree completely with your judgment, or your feeling about what makes a person a homosexual. I find it very hard to believe that a person decides who to find attractive. Maybe there are some who do. But I don't believe that I could decide to become attracted to men. And I don't think that a homosexual decides to be attracted to people of the same sex. I just wanted to present that there are opposing viewpoints.

D. Yes. That's my personal viewpoint.

Q. We want to make sure you know that if you disagree, that's fine. We're not trying to reach a consensus, and we're not really here to argue. We want to know your opinion, and your opinion. And we want to understand them as completely as we can. So, even if you hear something that you disagree with, let that person talk because we're trying to understand everybody's opinion.

B. There's some scientific evidence to support your contention that homosexuality is an inherited trait, and that war studies indicate that men born to women who experienced extreme stress during the gestation period, lost out on testosterone or some other chemical during gestation which affected their sexual orientation. Not their gender, but their sexual orientation. So there is something to that, that being homosexual is no more wrong than being black, or Asian, or having blond hair, or brown eyes. But, Colin Powell, and I believe he said it very well, said that "black" is not a behavior, it's a characteristic. Brown eyes are not behavior, but a characteristic. But homosexuality manifests itself in behavior, and it's a very deep, core behavior. And its impact cannot be underestimated, simply because of that.

C. I kind of agree. I object to homosexuality on a moral basis. I can read the bible, and to me it's says pretty clearly that it's not an acceptable thing. I have never, to my knowledge, served in a squadron with a homosexual. Or in any other capacity with one. At least not known to me. So I have absolutely nothing to relate it to. The closest thing I can relate it to, and it's probably a real poor analogy, is to alcoholism. You look at alcoholism and homosexuality--people always try to bring up the genetic link to homosexuality, and I'm not sure whether it's there, I don't have the knowledge base to try to decide that yet--maybe it's genetic, maybe it's emotional, maybe it's mental, I don't know. But, they've shown similar things with alcoholism. That maybe there's a genetic component to a predisposition to alcoholism. I've seen alcoholics in squadrons. And I've seen them adversely, in a very big way, affect

unit cohesion and morale. And it's not a good thing. That's the best analogy I can come up with, and I'd be happy to hear what you think of the analogy.

B. What it boils down to is behavior. Not a trait or disposition, but a behavior.

Q. Could a naval officer who feels he or she is homosexual, but does not commit homosexual acts--does not do the behavior. But have said "I am attracted to members of my own sex, but I have not, and I do not intend to commit homosexual acts. I want to stay in the Navy."

D. That doesn't change his argument about the unit cohesiveness. It doesn't change it whatsoever, because he's not going to have sex with a homosexual, but the tension and all the issues that have been brought up are still there regardless of whether the act has been committed or not.

Q. Do you mean the privacy issues that we talked about earlier?

D. Yes.

A. And the tension issue. For example, with a woman, where I have some concerns also, I may never actually engage in the physical activity, but some women in my squadron I might be attracted to. But there's still sexual tension. There's a dynamic between she and I, or she and other members of the squadron, that's absent from a purely heterosexual male unit. You put a known homosexual, whether he's actually ever performed a homosexual act, you'll have the same tensions arising.

Q. You mentioned before that the squadron that you were in was male, and as far as you know, heterosexual. And that you had a real high level of cohesion. Can you describe what kind of things were happening in that unit that gave it such a good cohesiveness?

A. Well, I would say that one thing is a male banter. We throw jabs at each other. Just our character and our actions are very male. We're not afraid to insult each other, whether it's on a professional mistake or a personal thing. You might consider it a hostile environment, because of the way it is.

Q. Are the jabs related to sexual orientation?

C. Not at all.

A. Well, no. They're about anything. If you make a mistake in the airplane, or in the job, or anything. It's just kind of a harsh environment.

C. It's like a close-knit family. Inside the family wall, you can downgrade each other, you can pick on each other. But outside, it's not something you do.

Q. Whatever the banter is, and the jabs back and forth, and the friendly insults, are they things that you couldn't say to a homosexual?

B. I'll give you an example. This morning when I came in this room--is that regular coffee or is that some kind of flavored coffee? Because I almost slammed you for having faggot-designer coffee. When you say bone or ivory instead of beige or off-white, you're talking faggot-designer colors. We make, on occasion, these references. You may call another guy a "bitch". I use these terms with my gay uncle, by the way. But he's just part of my family.

Q. And is he terribly offended?

B. No because he's part of my family.

Q. So that leads me back to the question. If there was a homosexual that already in the unit, and shared in the banter back and forth, would the cohesion be destroyed.

B. Well, partly. Because my uncle is not checking me out in the shower.

A. If you had a purely non-homophobic unit, and you introduced a homosexual who was willing to participate in the type of interactions going on, I think it's possible to have it work. Speaking personally, if I had a homosexual in my outfit, I don't think I'd really care. I mean, I have no real moral objection to it. I don't feel threatened by homosexuals. It wouldn't bother me. I'm sure I would actually find it intriguing to talk to this person.

B. As a known homosexual?

A. Yes. I don't feel threatened. I don't care if they're looking at me. Whatever. I don't plan on anything every happening. So, it's not something I worry about. But, first of all, I don't think you'd ever find a unit with no homophobia in it. And second of all, you put a couple of homosexuals in a unit, and then it becomes different. Those people actually look at each other in a different way.

Q. Do you mean, if they find each other attractive?

A. Right. Which I think is inevitable if the population of them is significant.

D. I'd like to make a comment on that. I really disagree with the term "homophobic," because that implies some kind of fear of homosexuals. The way I look at a homosexual is the same way I look at a child molester. I'm not afraid of a child molester. I just think he's a debased individual. I wouldn't want the Navy saying "okay, let's have a bunch of child molesters on the submarine". Where is our value system. But I would fall under what you would term a homophobic, I think, because I disagree with homosexuality. But it has nothing to do with a fear of homosexuality, It has to do with a value judgment. I relate it to child molesting. Having sex with children is wrong. Having sex with the same sex is wrong. I mean, I'm a homophobic by your definition, but I really disagree with the term homophobia because I think that's a euphemism that changes the terminology around and tries to make it from a value judgment into some kind of insecurity on the person of the homophobe.

Q. Would you like to define homophobia as someone who is not basing their objection on religious or moral beliefs, but rather on a fear of being watched in the shower, or just being around homosexuals?

D. The term phobia means fear. I personally don't have any fear of homosexuals. I feel compassion for them. I think they're sick individuals, but I don't fear them.

A. I'd be happy to use another term. I understand your point. And I'd be happy to use a another term to refer to people like yourself--people who object to homosexuality on a very moral basis.

C. Intolerance?

D. Intolerance of the behavior. I would like to see a homosexual reformed. Just like I would like to see a child molester reformed. I don't like to think of myself as intolerant of the person, but being tolerant of a behavior such as that, to me, is--I can't imagine that as a society we have come to a point where that's even a judgment call.

B. As long as we're heading in that direction, I'd like to bring up the historically predatory nature of homosexuals in the military. I'm not saying that this is exclusively an area which they have explored and exploited, but I know I have had personal experience. My wife, and several of her friends have had personal experience with female homosexuals who have had positions of authority and have used that position of authority to bring personnel of the same sex into a sexual relationship.



Q. Would you be willing to share those stories?

B. For example, my boss on this ship--his wife was an Air Force Master Sergeant--when she went through boot camp, her DI was a lesbian. And this DI coerced, forced, pressured, the boot personnel under her charge to engage in homosexual activity with her.

Q. How does that relate to sexual harassment? Would that be able to be charged under sexual harassment regulations, and you wouldn't even have to worry about whether it was a homosexuality issue or not?

B. That is so, so hard to prove. And it is so hard to identify.

C. I can't see it being any more hard to prove than regular sexual harassment.

B. There's a cohesiveness among people with a particular sexual orientation.

A. Were these people who were coerced homosexual? I mean these women who were coerced, were they gay?

C. It shouldn't matter.

B. It shouldn't matter, but it does. Because once that lesbian in a position of authority said "you're going to play my way"--and it's not overt like "you're going to strip for me and dance, or you're going to be on KP for the next week--it's more subtle. Let me get right down to the bottom line with it. They can entice and say "geez, aren't men just a bunch of shitheads, aren't they just a bunch of rats. Us women gotta stick together." And then it goes on from there. Once that person has succumbed and performed, and been brought into the homosexual act, then they're an accessory and they can't say anything. And the person who brought them into the evolution in the first place is going to say, "don't even think about it because I'll say that you did this."

C. Once you bend once, it's hard not to bend more.

D. I think that's an issue, but I don't think it's any more of an issue that with any other sexual tension between men and women. I see your issue, but how it relates to homosexuality, I don't see that it's any more of an issue.

B. You don't see that predatory relationship as much between men and women. You shouldn't. You shouldn't. I'm telling you from my personal experience that I've witnessed, and heard of, and been directly involved with this sort of relationship more with homosexual issues than with heterosexual personnel.

Q. Can you tell us some of your own personal experiences?

B. I'll start off when I was young. I was a dependent. My father was a supply officer on a submarine tender out of Guam. And one of the sailors on the ship, while I was just tooling around down at the beach, and one of the sailors off of his ship started trying to put the moves on me. I was only thirteen years old.

Q. What did he do to put the moves on you?

B. He starts out, "Hey, buy you a soda?" And I'm thinking this is a sailor from my dad's ship, this is cool. And he says, "hey, you want to go up to the so-and-s0?" And, fool that I am, I said okay. And we're still on the base, and not far from the housing area, and then he starts asking me questions like

“have you ever slept with a man before?” It was pretty apparent to me. Maybe something else caused my perception--I was assaulted by a 50 or 60-year old man on a train when I was fourteen.

Q. Was this the same kind of thing?

B. Same kind of thing.

Q. Assaulted or approached?

B. Well, I consider it assault because he started talking very graphically about what he'd like to do to me. I didn't care for it. In the submarine squadron I was in, the squadron was located on the tender down in King's Bay. And there was talk of--just talk, I didn't get personally involved in this one--of the lesbians onboard that ship running their own little Mafia and bringing the junior personnel into it. And it was all over the ship, and people were scared to death to do anything about it. Especially the CO and XO because of this sexual harassment kind of thing, thinking that they'd be accused of picking on female leadership.

Q. Let's dig into that a little bit more, because that's the second story you've described as sexual harassment, but you tie it to a problem with homosexuality. In some of the other interviews we've held we've talked a little bit about the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” policy and how it relates to fraternization violations and sexual harassment violations. Are they all meshed together? Could you do away with the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” policy if the Navy would address fraternization and sexual harassment incidents that you've talked about?

C. Those are separate issues. They are intertwined, but by eliminating the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell,” are you talking about allowing known homosexuals into the military? If we allow them in, can we just enforce these other two regulations? Is that what you're asking?

D. I'm just missing the question too.

Q. We can talk about it any way you'd like. But our question is if there were no rule about homosexuality at all--it would be “Don't Care” as long as you don't violate fraternization, sexual harassment, or any other regulations.

D. No.

B. I can see the accusations flying now. Seaman Schmuckately accusing known homosexual Petty Officer Umptyfrat that just because Schmuckately had to stay and wipe down the ladders after liberty call, that Schmuckately was being pressured into some homosexual relationship.

Q. Does that happen onboard ship with women now?

C. Absolutely. I think so. If you're talking about good order and discipline, I think the way it's implemented now, it's a big problem with good order and discipline because all it takes is the accusation and you're guilty until you can prove you're innocent. And it's very hard to prove you're innocent. Just like, on the other side of the coin, it's very hard to prove that it's true. But baseless accusations can ruin careers. If you add homosexual aspect into this, it's a whole other forum for more baseless accusations.

D. It seems to me you're trying to steer the issue toward that point of view. Before we even got to here, I think we all unanimously agreed that there is a good order and discipline measure that is going to be violated even before the fraternization and sexual harassment things start going. You get rid of that and you still have all the other stuff we still talked about for the first 40 minutes of this discussion.

Q. We're really not trying to steer the discussion any particular way, but if you have stories, we would like to hear them.

B. Let me reiterate that one point a different way. Integrating women into the combat structure is a leadership challenge already. It's a challenge and maybe we're not responding to the challenge appropriately. If you integrate homosexuals, it's going to be another, even bigger, leadership challenge. Is that a better way of saying that? My first exposure to homosexuals, and the event that really colored my feeling toward the whole thing was when I took my kids to DisneyWorld. We drove three hours from Jacksonville down to DisneyWorld, the kids in the back seat, you know, "Daddy's great. He's taking us to DisneyWorld." Three hours later, we get to DisneyWorld, check our tickets, go in the gate and find out it's the Second Annual Gay and Lesbian Day at Disney World. So all these people walking around in red shirts, doing stuff in public with each other that I wouldn't do with my wife in public. And my kids are there. And I can't, as a father, look at them and say, "Hey, on moral grounds, we're going to go home and skip DisneyWorld." I couldn't do that. So, it was a real tough position for me to be in. And we ended up staying there. And thank God my kids made a beeline for Mickey Mouse and didn't see anything around them. But it was a real big issue for me. And it caused me a lot of staying up late at night, and thinking "what was wrong with this picture?" And I think the bottom line is, I really don't care what people do behind their own doors, but when they bring it out in public and make an issue of it and try to force me to condone their actions, that's when it become an issue for me and then it's on moral grounds. To go beyond that, it's real hard for me. I liken it to things like the Navy's stance on adultery and alcoholism. Adultery on the books is wrong, but we kind of look the other way. That's one of those kinds of things that unless it becomes a major problem, we don't really care about it. Even though it's a UCMJ offense, and even though that kind of behavior on a deployment has a detrimental impact on unit cohesion and readiness and all that other good stuff. Likewise, alcoholism. We're starting to take a tougher stand on that. But it's still one of those things we'll look the other way on until it becomes an issue.

Q. How do you liken the adultery and alcoholism to homosexuality?

C. How we deal with homosexuals is kind of the same way. It's one of those things where we're pushing it under the rug. We're not dealing with it really. And let's see where it goes--what happens. If it becomes a big issue, now we can take it on and attack it, and we've got a legal ground. But in the meantime, as long as we keep it kind of hidden--kind of underground--it's okay. Much like adultery and alcoholism are.

Q. Like we are doing now?

C. Yes. I think that's the way we're going with the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" thing. If you're looking for consistent leadership, even though you kind of disagree with it, well at least we're sort of being consistent there.

Q. Okay. Thanks.

B. I'll give you an example of an incident. SK3 Yyy is in his rack, we're in a liberty port. SK3 Xxx comes off of liberty--trashed. He is drunk out of his bloody mind. He crawls into Yyy's rack and starts pulling Yyy's shorts down. Yyy wakes up and comes absolutely unfucking glued. Beats the shit out of Xxx. And then the Master at Arms gets down there and all sorts of crap happens. I get woke up. Xxx is placed in sick bay to sober up. Yyy feels so violated because this guy was two inches from wrapping his lips around his dick. I mean, I would feel violated. And forgive me if I speak a little bluntly. What came out of it, was that Xxx denied it. Yyy still feels violated. Xxx was a popular guy in the group. To this day, I'm not sure, but I think Xxx is a homosexual. But I did not pursue having him removed from Naval service because he was a good storekeeper and he got along well with the guys even after that incident. But there was that element now. Yyy was thinking, "this guy who racks underneath me, crawled in my rack and tried to suck my dick."

How do you think he feels? How would you feel? The fact that we were only 50 percent manned, may have had something to do with it, but I wasn't willing to give the guy up. He was a good storekeeper, he

had a lot of potential, and if he keeps his homosexuality under his hat, he'll go far. And he'll do well, and he'll make a contribution to the Navy. In this particular incident, Xxx said "no, no, I thought you were a girl," and that kind of nonsense. And eventually, it blew over for everybody except Yyy. Yyy transferred.

C. Was Xxx married?

B. Xxx was not married.

C. So you only have two of them--alcohol and homosexuality. If he was married, you'd have adultery too.

D. I think we are trying to turn the military into some kind of social engineering . . . I mean, the United States military exists for one function. And that's to defend the United States. If it exists for one purpose, and the only reason I'm in the military, he's in the military . . . none of us has a right to be in the military . . . we serve in the military at the pleasure of the president of the United States. If he wants to remove my commission tomorrow, he can do that. Why are we trying to take something, and socially engineer a warfighting machine? What is the purpose? I don't understand why . . .

A. Well, I think it's what we consider justice. Recently we didn't let women do things like fly fighter jets or tactical aircraft. A lot of people would look at that and say that's very unfair. I have flown with some women and they've been very good pilots. And despite my objection because of the sexual tension, the old law says "even though you do possess all the qualities that would make you an excellent pilot, and would contribute to an outfit, we're not going to let you do it." That seems very unfair. Now, I recently found out that a guy that I served with back in [a previous duty station] was gay. We had suspicion back then. He's actually a pretty good friend of mine. He's a great pilot. He was a great administrator on the ground. He's another case of a person who has the qualifications. Now, you think that he's somehow morally corrupted, and that's your opinion. I feel that he's biologically not quite right. Whatever the case is, if we tell him that because of this inclination of yours, you can't do this job, that doesn't seem very fair. Just like 40 or 50 years ago when we said to black people, you can't do this. You say one's a behavior, it's undiscovered what it is that causes a person to behave this way. But that's why these things are brought up. People feel that it's unfair. It's unjust.

D. I understand. Forget about whether it's a behavior, or trait, or not. I am not prejudiced in the least. But to a certain extent, in the United States military, you have to say this is a military organization. It exists for one purpose. To defend the territories of the United States. The military does not exist for me. It does not exist for him. It does not exist for you, or you, or anybody in there. You do not have a right to serve in the military. If it is bad for the military for a homosexual to be in there, even if it is unfair to the homosexual, then he should not serve in the military. This military serves for the purpose of the United States, not for the individuals in the military. It is my privilege to get a paycheck from the United States military. I do not have a right to serve in the United States military.

A. Right, but the United States military serves at the pleasure of the populace of the United States. And if the people take a stance on something . . . for example, when it came to bringing blacks into the military. Enough momentum was gotten, and we started feeling that we should try to integrate these people into the environment. Now, I'm sure, there's no doubt in my mind that unit cohesion was corrupted.

C. Absolutely.

A. But, they did it because they thought it was right. Even though it did probably degrade the capabilities of the outfit for awhile.

D. I'm glad that they did. I'm glad that they brought blacks into the military. Twenty years later, I don't think those problems exist anymore. For the most part, it's a very minor problem.

C. I think you're naive to say that.

D. Maybe I come from a very narrow point. I mean, we were on a submarine and I don't remember how many black people there were, but I don't think there were any tensions between blacks and whites.

C. I've got a lot of black friends who pretty much think differently. And I encountered it in my squadron. Four years ago, somebody wrote some racist slogan on something, and the skipper's reaction was that we all went to quarters right then and we addressed it and said "this will not be tolerated."

D. I'm on the same side as you guys with the black issue.

B. I'm just saying that it's naive to say that there's still not a problem there. I think there still is. After that, I took a bunch of my black sailors aside and said, "Hey is there a problem here? Am I being so stinking blind that I didn't see this?" And the answer was "Yeah, in some way there still is." What Colin Powell said was that being black is a characteristic and not a behavior. And I think that makes it a little bit different.

A. Right. But I think there are a lot of people in this country who are starting to wonder. For example, my opinion is that any man who is sexually attracted to another man, whether he ever does anything, is a homosexual. That's my opinion.

D. I don't want to see blacks and whites in tension. I love my black brother as much as anybody else. And I think we should all work together. If there is a tension, though, that supports my side of the argument more than the other side.

A. I don't understand that.

D. If we are affecting the success of the United States military for some social policy, that goes against the grain of what the United States military is there for in the first place.

C. Remember, we're supposed to represent a cross section of society.

D. Where does it say that in the constitution? Where does it say that the United States military is supposed to represent a cross section of society. The United States military is supposed to win wars. And if I have homosexuals in there, and I can't win wars because of that, what good does it do me?

C. We're beholden to Congress for funding.

D. If it's a law, we should support the law. I agree with that. If the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is the law of the land right now, I'll raise my right hand and support that policy. We are debating the policy right now. We're not debating whether we should support the policy that's in existence.

Q. Your statement is exactly what we are trying to explore. The Department of Defense has taken the stance that the military's purpose is to win wars, and the inclusion of known homosexuals in the military would interfere with that purpose. There are three big arguments right now. One is privacy, one is combat effectiveness, and the one we'd like to focus on today is unit cohesion. You seem to be stating that we can't win wars with homosexuals because it's a unit cohesion problem. And that's what we'd like to discuss today. What is it about homosexuals that is causing the unit cohesion problem? We're not trying to do away with the problem, or tell you that there isn't a problem. We're just trying to find out what you think the problem really is.

C. What we're trying to do is cause the military to lead a societal change. And that's absolutely the wrong way to go about it. Homosexuals have not gained widespread, complete and total acceptance in society. When they do, then we can represent a cross section of society and follow that. Maybe then it

will be acceptable and correct that we integrate homosexuals into the military. In the meantime, there are large segments--significant majorities--of society that totally repudiate homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle. And until society changes, and accepts that, don't change the military. Corporations . . . I don't think that it's in their best interests to integrate women and minorities if they don't really want to, and yet that is the law. It hurts their competitiveness, I'm sure. Yet, society as a whole, I think, has said this is acceptable, this is the right thing to do, we will do this. And it's something that's enforceable. We do need to represent society, and yet I think it's wrong that we try to lead on the homosexuality thing.

Q. What if a guy who finishes top in his class--say nuclear training school--or sub school . . . What if he is the most qualified sub driver? And what if that guy was a homosexual?

D. That doesn't change any of the issues that we're talking about.

B. As soon as he manifests his homosexuality, he is no longer qualified.

D. If he is detrimental to the unit, it doesn't matter how good his talent is on watch.

C. Boy, that's great. If we had submarines with a crew of one. Employ that guy. He's awesome. In the meantime, he's got to work with others. And he's not going to get wide spread acceptance throughout the command because people object on many different fronts. Morality being one, and there're a whole bunch of other reasons to object.

B. You can't dress in a submarine stateroom without touching the guy next to you. It's a simple, physical fact of life. It ain't going to happen. Did we lead society by integrating blacks? Was that an altruistic move within the Armed Forces? I think what we should be looking for is what is the effective use of resources. By saying we're not going to use women in the Armed Forces, we have denied ourselves access to a valuable resource. By saying we're not going to use blacks or other minorities, we have denied ourselves access to a valuable resource. By saying we're not going to use homosexuals, perhaps we have denied ourselves access to a valuable resource, but there is a price tag that comes with that. There is no baggage that comes with a black man or a black woman, or anybody else because their behavior is focused and conforms to the norms which we expect in the military unit. But when we bring a homosexual into the picture, there's two types now, known and unknown. Unknown homosexuals' behavior conforms to the unit's expectations. When the homosexual manifests his orientation by saying, which is also an act, then he has introduced an element of cost to his resource. And the cost exceeds the value of that resource.

Q. What would happen if you get to your next ship and a new XO shows up on board and says that he's a homosexual? In our last interview, we talked quite a bit about leadership and homosexuality. Can we talk about that a little today?

D. Why didn't he keep his mouth shut? If he kept his mouth shut, he's supporting the policy. Everyone else is supporting the policy. There's not a unit cohesion conflict there because if no one knows you're homosexual, then no one has a problem with your behavior. Once they find out you're homosexual, that's when everything we're talking about comes into play. Everything changes when he opens his mouth and says "I'm a homosexual". He changed the rules of the game.

Q. How would you react to that?

B. I would react to that professionally to that in saying that this guy has a judgment problem. There used to be a block on the fitreps. This guy comes in and the first thing he does is introduce division. He introduces an element of tension that is not conducive to unit cohesion. Therefore, I not only question him on the basis of his sexual orientation. I also question his ability to exercise good judgment.

C. To lead, you have to have the respect of those you're going to lead. That would be very hard for me in that instance. Number one, because he obviously doesn't abide by the policy, rules and regulations of the

Navy. But, also, I'd put him right back into the block of homosexuals, adulterers, alcoholics. Things that I object to on moral grounds. Things that I can't, from my heart, respect. How can I follow somebody who pursues those things. I've worked for skippers who fall into those other two categories--unknown, obviously, on the homosexual category--and it had a detrimental effect on morale, because I cannot respect an individual like that.

D. You have a guy telling you to follow the laws that he lays down, but he's not following the oaths he made to his wife or responsibilities he has to his children. How can a guy look at you and say, "okay, I want you to follow these rules, when I don't follow the basic rules of life?" If you see a guy cheating on his wife, what's the difference between that changing a log, or falsifying a record or something? How can a guy like that take you to Captain's Mast? I don't think the Navy should be any more tolerant of adultery or alcoholism than we are of homosexuality. But that's not what we're talking about here.

Q. Let me change the question a little bit, because if he stood up and said, "I am a homosexual," that is clearly against current regulations and he would probably be discharged immediately. But what if he didn't say that. Under today's policy, he could be a homosexual as long as he kept it secret. As some of you had already implied, you might suspect something about him. Could you still follow that person? Could he still be an effective leader?

B. Yeah. What's the problem?

Q. Even if you perceived that he was homosexual?

B. You can't perceive anything. You really can't. Even the gays can't figure this one out. You know, I went to a restaurant with my uncle and I said, "now, tell me which one of these waiters is queer." And he said, "that one, that one, that one." And I said, "really, then how come they keep picking me for a homosexual?" I am straight as an arrow, and if anyone ever thought about grabbing me, I would beat the living crap out of them. You can't tell. There was a guy--effeminate--I mean, this guy swished when he walked. But he was straight. Married, had kids, you know, had a rack of Playboy at home. Could have been an act, I don't know.

Q. What if you did suspect? What if a large portion of the wardroom suspected? Would you be able to follow that person?

C. Perception is nothing until you prove it. I perceive President Clinton of being a crook and a liar, and yet he's not in jail. It means nothing until you can prove it.

Q. But does the individual still have leadership capabilities?

B. Yeah, because we, as professionals, it's incumbent on us to focus on the mission. I didn't like my first skipper on the submarine. I thought he was a complete asshole. If he was on fire, I wouldn't piss on him to put it out. But the man could absolutely fight the ship. I would go to war with that man. What he is personally has no effect on me. We, as professionals, must look beyond that personal aspect and look at the professional aspect.

A. It sounds like you're endorsing letting homosexuals in, then.

B. As long as they don't manifest that behavior.

D. I think most of us support the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. As the Navy has it right now, I can support that policy.

A. But it's interesting what you just said almost sounds like you're saying "even if I know he's homosexual, the guy fights a ship with the best of them."

Q. Do you mean it's okay as long as he doesn't grab me?

A. Right. So it almost sounds like you're supporting letting somebody in who's very capable.

B. Well, let me put it this way. I knew my skipper wasn't focused on getting laid while we were underway. I never suspected that he might be thinking about getting laid underway. If he was homosexual, I might think that his priorities might be misaligned.

A. Okay, but he still has these warfighting capabilities that you were talking about. Now, say if it becomes apparent that the guy was gay . . . but to you and I, and to anybody else on the ship, he hasn't done anything to act on those homosexual inclinations, he still fights the ship.

B. But, I'm not suspecting anything. When he comes out and manifests his homosexuality by either saying he is, or getting caught in an act, then I have to question his ability to rationally interact with his wardroom. Because, now I'm thinking, he could be playing sexual favorites, which is a common tactic if it's allowed to go on. Let me give you an example, and it's not a homosexual example. [The Commanding Officer of one Navy ship] was relieved of his command because he was sleeping with his legal officer. He was married. The Commodore said . . .

C. Was he a drinker? Just kidding.

B. Actually, I think both of them were. But, the female legal officer slept her way through the chain of command until she finally hit the CO. The Commodore said, "poor judgment, fraternization, adultery, you're out of here. Just pack up your ego and get out of here because you are not going to pick up a star." Now, you think you got me, but I'm telling you, if he was a homosexual and I didn't know it, and he could fight the ship, it would have no bearing at all. But if I'm in that wardroom and I know the CO is gay, then I'm thinking, what is he going to do to satisfy his physical requirements underway.

A. What physical requirements?

B. His sexual desires underway.

A. His sexual inclinations? You call them requirements?

B. I will address that as desires if you want. However, when I'm underway, I'm not sleeping in the same berthing compartment as females. And I'm not going to climb into the upper rack with my shipmate. I'm underway to work. Not to engage in sexual activities. But a homosexual, whether they're known or not, they may try to do that. The opportunity is there, it may be taken.

Q. Early on, we talked about something, and I don't want to misrepresent what you said, but that it would be difficult to follow a leader who you knew was gay because you would question his judgment. What we'd like to talk about now, is what is the difference between whether you knew he was gay, or whether you suspected he was gay? Would you still question his judgment?

D. There's a very gray area there. If I know someone is gay, then I can be intellectually honest with myself and say I know I suspect his judgment. If I suspect someone is gay, I like to think that I am objective enough to think that I may be wrong. I could be wrong. I could look at an effeminate person, that swishey guy he's talking about, and suspect this guy is gay. I could be wrong about that. And I'd like to say that I could give a guy the benefit of the doubt. I could be wrong. No reasonable person should act based on their suspicions.

Q. Even if it comes to life and death situations which you guys face every day.



D. Like this swishey guy, he's talking about. I mean, if he wants to walk around like that it may be something that he can't help. As a person trying to function with other people in society, I should not operate on my suspicions of your orientation. If I suspect he's gay, I keep that to myself and don't make any value judgments. If he comes out and says he's gay, that's a whole different issue altogether.

B. I may suspect that someone is gay. But if they don't disclose their sexual orientation, then I have confidence that they are exercising good judgment even if they are homosexual. When you introduce homosexual behavior into a military unit, I think we all agree that it has a detrimental effect on unit cohesiveness. If I suspect that a commanding officer is gay, but he operates in his dealings with the crew in a way which does not introduce or manifest homosexual behavior, then I'm thinking to myself, okay he swishes, he lisps, but he's not manifesting homosexual behavior. Therefore I have greater confidence in his judgment because he is keeping his orientation, or his sexual life, exclusive of his professional life.

A. Or you're wrong.

B. I could be wrong.

Q. In the first hour, we talked about a belief that just because he chose to be homosexual shows that he has impaired judgment and shouldn't be trusted in other areas. Is that what you believe?

D. That's what I said. If I suspect that one of my sailors is doctoring logs, I can't act on that until I find evidence that he is. So should I treat him like he's a person of no integrity. No, I should not treat him like that unless I get some firm evidence, or he tells me he's doing it. So I think the whole point is mute based on personal suspicion. It doesn't become an issue until it becomes confirmed, whether it's an overt behavior or a personal statement.

Q. If you suspect someone of being a homosexual, and within yourself you feel that if he really is a homosexual I should suspect his judgment, then should we as Naval officers try to find out if he is because the crew may be at risk because of his possible impaired judgment?

D. So, do we have a witch trial?

Q. Or an investigation. I'm not saying we should, I'm asking your opinion.

D. I think that if someone is doctoring logs, they have a problem with moral integrity and should not be serving in the military. But I could be suspecting that based on misperceptions.

Q. But would you try to find out?

D. I could suspect that he's gay (points at another interviewee), and I could spend millions of dollars trying to investigate his personal life. That's ridiculous. I don't think that should be pursued.

A. I think the alcoholism analogy is an interesting one. I think that if my skipper said he was gay, but never acted on it--If a man says he's an alcoholic, but he doesn't drink, he still has a propensity to behave in a certain way, but they don't. If I knew that my skipper was gay, other than I personally don't care. Because of my theory about what makes a person gay, I don't question his judgment. He has something that makes him attracted to men instead of women. But as far as his ability to lead, I have no problem with it.

D. We have a fundamental difference in our beliefs about what makes someone gay. The very fact that we have different viewpoints based on our beliefs shows me that we are discussing the wrong issues here. We are discussing the surface instead of attacking the root cause, and trying to debate on the moral issues. Is it a moral problem, or is it not? And you're saying that's not the focus of this discussion. Yet we can't talk about the surface issues without our beliefs coming to the top because we don't come from the same

point of view. He's coming from over there, and I'm coming from over here. We don't have anything in common because we're not talking about the root cause.

Q. But you can talk about the unit cohesiveness.

D. And we agree on that. I think it's interesting that both of us agree on the unit cohesiveness despite our beliefs.

Q. I think what you're saying is that it creates a unit cohesion problem whether it is morally wrong, or not necessarily morally wrong. What is the unit cohesion problem? Because there are some people who say there is something wrong with homosexuals. Sin is a word they use a lot, yet they say if homosexuals want to be in the military--fine. Those individuals don't want to be friends with homosexuals, but as long as they do a good job, it's fine. You go a little bit farther than that, in saying that homosexuals have impaired judgment. People with impaired judgment should not be driving ships, is that right?

C. Both of you are getting to the same point--the unit cohesion thing. You're going one route and you're going another route, but we get to the same point. I think the underlying thing here is to think about the characteristics of good leadership. Honor, integrity, commitment. Let's throw discipline in there. To have a disciplined approach. A disciplined personal life. To me, everybody's got demons on their backs, trying to get you to do different things. I've been monogamous for 10-plus years, and yet I still walk down the street and look at women and think, "man, I wonder what, you know, that'd be kind of neat." And start thinking about pursuing them. And it's a disciplined approach. It's just a demon. So maybe a homosexual has a similar demon. Maybe an alcoholic has the same thing. But do you have the discipline to live, and embody, the integrity and the value system that is required of a good leader. To live up to those leadership standards means you exercise a discipline to fight off all those demons. How a homosexual would impair good order and discipline and unit cohesion, is because it causes you to question the value system of the individual you're dealing with. And having a skipper who's a professed homosexual, those are things that I can't respect. That's something that to me, is wrong. I don't think I'm the only one who feels that way.

A. And yet, he could be exercising tremendous discipline. Like you said, he has the demon. Let's say that it's an innate thing, so that now he's having to fight constantly to suppress this abnormal sexual inclination. And he's successful at it. So he's demonstrating some measure, some degree, of self-discipline. I think part of the issue is that we operate in a work environment unlike most environments. We go out on these little self contained units, and we can't get away from each other. And that's why sexual tension is such a big issue. I keep saying that if I had a skipper and he was the only gay in my squadron--me personally--I wouldn't care. I really don't think I'd have any big issue with his leadership. But, start putting a couple of them in a squadron . . .

C. But you follow people that you respect?

A. Yes.

D. How about a child molester? If you knew that your CO was a child molester, do you think you would say that's okay, that's just his personal preference.

A. I guess what you're asking me if I had a skipper who I knew had that inclination? If a man ever acted on that, then that changes the subject completely. It's still difficult. If I knew that he had the inclination to molest children, there would be a huge struggle there. If the man is successfully fighting this perverse urge, it's a difficult question.

D. I agree.

A. It's a shame that he has this terrible urge. But if he's actually fighting it, and successfully suppressing it, it's not so clear anymore.

B. It becomes very clear to me. The guy is suppressing it, or he's not. The guy who's successfully fighting this demon is exhibiting good discipline, is exhibiting good judgment, is focused on the mission. Therefore, I would have no problem at all whether I suspect he's homosexual or not. The fact that he's successfully keeping that separate from his professional work gives me confidence in his judgment. In fact, if I suspect he was gay, and felt really certain that he was gay, but he was going the extra mile to exhibit good judgment and keep that tendency exclusive from the Navy environment, then I would respect him even more.

A. So, he's professed himself to be gay?

B. No. He is not gay. He is not professing his homosexuality.

A. So, is a man a homosexual if he is attracted sexually to other men but he has never acted on it and never intends to.

B. He is a homosexual.

A. Yet the person you just described was a homosexual who was exercising discipline.

B. I suspected he is. And he has not stated he is a homosexual. Because once you state you are a homosexual, you have introduced that element into the unit environment. You have introduced that element to the detriment of the professional environment. If he does not confirm or deny--you don't even have to bring it into the picture--as long as he doesn't say, hey, I'm fruity, or something like that, he keeps his behavior on a purely professional level. Not introducing this divisive element of his sexual orientation. Then he is exhibiting extraordinary discipline and extremely good judgment because he knows the potential detrimental affect that orientation may have on his unit if it's manifested or stated.

Q. You're nodding your head. Do you agree with that?

D. Yes. I agree with him. We all have our own demons. Maybe A. has a propensity to lie. If he brings lying into his work and lies to his boss, and lies to his co-workers, then he demonstrates unreliability to be a Navy officer. But if he has the propensity to lie, but still does not lie and he operates truthfully with people, then he is demonstrating good judgment and is driving back his demons. I can agree with that. There is a difference between someone's propensity to perform immoral behavior and performing immoral behavior. If there is a guy who says I tend toward liking to look at children, to me that is debased. But if he says I have this problem, but I never engaged in it. I don't go out and buy child pornography magazines. I don't put myself in situations where I want to see kids in the shower. Then he's showing good discipline and good judgment.

C. I've had adulterous thoughts. And yet I haven't acted on them.

D. Then he's not an adulterer. But if he starts acting on them, then he's an adulterer.

A. So it sounds like you're supporting then, is that if a man says I am a homosexual . . . For example if he goes to a counselor . . .

C. If he says I have homosexual tendencies? I have contemplated this, and yet I haven't acted on them?

A. Yes. That person is, by my definition at least, a homosexual.

- D. No. I don't say that. A person who is homosexual either has engaged in homosexual acts, or indulges his homosexual tendencies. As in, looks at other men on the submarine, or whatever. I don't consider a person with homosexual tendencies a homosexual as long as they don't indulge their tendencies.
- A. That's a disagreement between us. I think any man who is sexually attracted to another man is a homosexual whether he ever acts on it.
- Q. Which is in line with what the policy is today. The policy refers to homosexual behavior and homosexual orientation. A person who is physically or emotionally attracted to members of the same sex, even though no homosexual acts have been committed, will be discharged.
- D. But I think of a homosexual act, as leering at someone in the shower. That is a homosexual act to me.
- A. If C. looks at a woman that he finds attractive, and she's in the work place, and he just kind of happens to be staring at her. Is that an adulterous act?
- D. No.
- B. That's sexual harassment.
- A. We go through all kinds of mental energy to conjure up this little situation in his mind, and he may even be leering.
- D. In my personal marriage, if I tell my wife that I am faithful to her. I may be tempted to look at another woman. If I engage that temptation and indulge in that temptation and take the second look, or the third look, or the fourth look, or buy pornography, or whatever. To me, that is being unfaithful to my marriage vows.
- A. Would you consider it adultery?
- D. If I have a temptation, and I resist that temptation, I am not unfaithful to my marriage vows. I think there are severities. Clearly, if I went out and leered at another woman, or I told my wife that I bought a Playboy or whatever, and I was leering at women. She wouldn't like that. That would be wrong. But I think there is a severity to this. If I said well, it's the same thing, so I went out and slept with a girl too. There's a severity there. One is worse than the other. So yes. If a guy is homosexual, there are degrees. Does he leer at other men, or does he commit homosexual acts with them? I think either case . . .if he's leering at other people in the submarine, or the squadron, that has a detrimental effect on unit cohesion.
- A. Let's say he does none of that. He's a disciplined person.
- D. Then I say, so be it. To me, that's not a homosexual.
- A. So then what we've come up to is that you don't agree with "Don't Ask, Don't Tell". You feel that a person who's homosexual, should be able to, in some forum, whether it's in counseling or whatever, express that he has homosexual feelings.
- D. No. That person is not a homosexual any more than C. is not an adulterer. You are not a homosexual if you have homosexual tendencies, unless you indulge those tendencies.
- A. But the present policy forbids a person from even saying he is attracted to men.
- D. No.
- Q. Yes, it does.

C. There's a hole in the logic there.

D. The whole issue here has never been debated on what it means to say "I am a homosexual." We disagree on what it means.

Q. Okay, but the policy defines orientation as being physically or emotionally attracted to members of the same sex. And the policy says that if an individual states that he has a homosexual orientation, he would be discharged.

B. That's a good way to get out of a contract.

Q. Because the policy says that statement implies a propensity to engage in homosexual activity. Even if the individual says he hasn't, and doesn't intend to, engage in homosexual activity. Just the fact that he said he has a homosexual orientation, DOD says that we should think he is likely to engage in homosexual acts. One way of rebutting that discharge would be to prove, somehow . . .

D. It can't be done. You can't prove a negative.

Q. Well, it has been done.

D. No it hasn't. They have not proved it. How can you prove a negative.

Q. Meinhold used that argument to remain on active duty.

A. I want to hear about that. How can you possibly prove that you won't do something in the future?

Q. It is more of a case-by-case basis than a proof. If you've got somebody who is a superior performer, and has a great record, and then comes out of the closet. And the unit is looking for a way to keep him around. So, it's a rebuttal. It's an argument that says he shouldn't be discharged because he's promised he's never going to engage in homosexual activity, and the court believes him.

D. The reason we have some disagreement on this is because there is a large perception in the heterosexual community that homosexuality is being forced upon us as a normative behavior. And that most homosexuals, when they say "I am a homosexual," say it because they want to get rid of their shame. That's why there is a very fine line between what he is saying makes a homosexual, and what I am saying makes a homosexual. I think for most intents and purposes, most of the people who come out and say "I am homosexual" do not say "I struggle with this issue," they say "I'm tired of struggling with this issue. I am a homosexual and I want everybody to know that." That's clear cut.

Q. What do you mean? What part of that is clear cut?

C. When you say "I am a homosexual," that's it. Essentially what you're telling me is that you've committed a homosexual act. And at that point, the policy is something that I can enforce legally, ethically, and be at peace with. But if you come and tell me that you've had homosexual tendencies, to me, that's real ambiguous.

D. I think the popular perception of homosexuality is that when people come out of the closet they are attempting to justify their behavior, and they are saying "I'm tired of my behavior being a secret, I want to bring it out into the open and accept myself. Please accept me also." To me that is 99.8 percent of the homosexual argument. That's what most people come up with. This .2 percent that I'm trying to talk about I think has almost no bearing on the policy whatsoever.

Q. I'm not sure I understand what the .2 percent is.

D. The .2 percent that say, “look, I have these propensities. I am ashamed of them. I think these propensities are wrong. I think it is not normal behavior, but I struggle with this.” I’m a kleptomaniac, okay. When I get in the store, I get these urges. I want to steal things. But I know that stealing is wrong, so I don’t do it. To me, 99.8 percent of homosexuals would say, “I’m a kleptomaniac, you have to accept me for what I am. Because I steal, that’s my normal behavior, so you have to accept that.” I don’t think the small difference between what we define as a homosexual . . .

A. Small? I think it’s a substantial difference.

D. I think it’s a small percentage of the arguments that have come up about homosexuals in the Navy, is people that say “my behavior that I tend to is wrong.” How many homosexuals have you heard say that they tend toward homosexuality, but they do not want to perform that behavior. Very few. I haven’t heard any. Most of them who come out say “I am a homosexual. It’s time I come out of the closet. I want you to know who I am.” That is 100 percent of what I’ve heard. I’ve never heard someone come out and say “I have homosexual propensities, but I know it’s wrong. I don’t leer at my shipmates, I don’t buy male pornography magazines, or whatever.”

B. They are stating their orientation. They are not stating their desire to engage in that activity in the future. Pure and simple. I don’t think anybody in the military who says they are gay is telling that because of your .2 percent who are saying they want some help. They’re saying it because they are tired of fighting it and they intend to indulge the hereditary, or social, or whatever, orientation in their lives. Fine. Do it outside of the military.

D. I agree.

Q. Okay. I don’t want to get to far off track, because our focus is not to understand the psyche of a homosexual, or why individuals come out of the closet. We would like to focus on how would it affect unit cohesion. I’d like to get back to something you said. You said you worked with someone, in fact, were friends with someone in a squadron, who you thought was a good performer in the air and a good administrator on the ground. Apparently a good officer.

A. Yes. The skipper loved him.

B. Oh really, now you’ve got a command problem.

A. If the skipper was gay, he would be the most masculine gay person I’ve ever seen.

Q. You said the unit suspected that this individual was gay, but didn’t know for sure. So, how was the unit cohesion? And also, are there ways that someone could come out that wouldn’t disrupt cohesion?

A. Let me tell you that he’s still in the Navy. He didn’t come out while he was in my squadron. And the squadron was not a sea-going squadron. So we had the luxury of being able to go home and separate ourselves from each other.

Q. So privacy was not an issue?

A. I think that’s very important. I think that what we do in the Navy is very unusual. We are confined with people. Sexual tension is a really hard thing to fight constantly. And if you’re constantly facing it in a confined environment, many people will have the strength to resist it. Others will not. Anyway, we were shore-based, the guy was suspected to be gay. I don’t think it really affected unit cohesion at all. I know, at sea recently, this is how it came out. Apparently someone discovered he was writing a letter to someone, and it wasn’t a woman. And it was pretty affectionate letter, and they posted it in the ready room. His squadron already suspected it, but the skipper took the letter off and presented it to this guy

and said, “hey, we’ll consider this an I didn’t ask, you didn’t tell.” And he was actually permitted to stay in the Navy, because I think he was a superior performer.

Q. Was the letter to someone on the ship?

A. I think it was a male lover.

Q. Not a Navy member?

A. Probably not, but I don’t know. I’ve never talked to the guy about it. One of these days I hope to.

Q. This person came out, and it was accidental?

A. Yes.

Q. Our literature suggests that when a person comes out, it creates problems. But that there are ways to come out that create less problems. But when a person is accidentally outed, there is a much higher incidence of gay-bashing, or violence. Was there anything like that?

A. I don’t know. I’d like to talk to him about it. He’s a friend of mine. I’ve done things with him as recently as in the last year. I’ve never talked to him about his sexual orientation. Most of my male friends and I talk about women. That’s not a topic of conversation I’ve ever had with him. So I don’t know how it affected his unit at sea.

Q. Have any of you had homosexuals in your unit?

B. I gave you an example, but it was swished, swept under the carpet.

Q. Well, back to that. Are you talking about the example of the two petty officers. What happened. Petty Officer Yyy, I think . . .

B. He was the victim.

Q. Yes. Didn’t he file charges?

B. Yes.

Q. And what happened in the investigation.

B. What happened was that the rest of the crew, the storekeepers, came to Xxx’s defense. Some reluctantly, some otherwise. My chief and I wrote our statements and did not talk to the rest of the division about their statements. But what it boiled down to was that this was an aberrant piece of behavior and was not likely to be repeated and did not necessarily indicate a manifestation of homosexuality.

A. But you thought he was gay?

B. I suspected. I’m not sure. But he never actually said he was gay. And for the rest of the year and half that he was on board with me, he was an excellent performer. He actually went out and got a girl friend, and brought her to the ship. I don’t know, it could have been his sister. He made efforts to indicate that his orientation was not in that direction.

Q. Was there a cohesion problem because the other petty officers felt that he was staring at them in the shower?

B. As long as the issue was fresh, and there was significant doubt, there were real problems.

Q. Even with these guys who came to his defense?

B. Yes. It had to be discussed in the division after all the statements were made. Everybody wanted to deny it, first of all, because Xxx was a good guy. He can't be gay. No way.

A. Was he effeminate?

B. Yes. He didn't lisp. But he was somewhat more effeminate than you would expect of a rough-tough sea-going guy. Essentially we worked to focus on non-sexual issues. He was a good performer, a good shipmate. He was essentially a good sailor. And we worked to keep that incident as something else entirely. It was like, well, he was blind stinking drunk, didn't know what the hell he was doing, it was an accident. And as soon as we got away from that, things were back to normal. But for the first four or five days, it was, oh oh, here comes Xxx. Everybody out of the shower.

Q. The policy, as it's written right now, point blank says homosexuality is incompatible with military service. We'd like to get your views about whether that is a correct statement.

D. Yes.

C. Yep.

B. Homosexual behavior is incompatible. Is that what you said?

Q. The policy says homosexuality is incompatible with military service. And the policy defines that as behavior or orientation.

B. I would not go that far. I would say homosexual behavior is incompatible with military service.

Q. Okay, and you guys at this other end of the table kind of agreed that homosexual orientation is the same as homosexual behavior.

C. You (points at A.) had a lot of difference with D. on that. I'd sure like to hear what you thought to be the big disagreement there.

A. First of all, I don't consider it an error in judgment. I think that the person who is gay has the misfortune of being gay.

C. So you would agree with the genetic argument.

A. Biological is how I would describe it. I do believe that there are some people who have decided because of life situations that this is the type of behavior they are going to conduct. But I think most gay, at least men, I don't know much about women, but I think most gay men are biologically determined to be gay. You probably see it from a very early age, and sure enough, as they get older it's obvious. I don't necessarily agree that it's incompatible with military service. We have lots of outfits in the military that are just offices on the beach, that are not a whole lot different in operation than any civilian world.

C. Where you are required to relate with people on quite the in-depth level that you are on a confined sea-going environment.

A. Yes.

Q. Is privacy the issue, then?



C. When the Navy's just a job, it's just like anyplace else. You can go to work at nine and go home at five. I don't care what you do with your free time. On the other hand, when we start putting everybody together on a great gray ghetto, going out to sea. And I'm with this guy 24 hours a day, and then you end up in a strange port and you're told to use the buddy system--find somebody with similar likes and dislikes. You're on a whole different level. It's not a job.

A. And I do believe that homosexuality is incompatible with that type of job.

C. Sexual tension.

A. That's why I disagree with having women out there. The same exact reason. My own experience with trying to suppress the sexual tension--I can't, it's part of my being. If I see an attractive woman, there's a different feeling than towards a man.

C. There's always that question, that temptation.

A. Yeah, and I think it really changes the nature of that relationship. You can still deal with each other professionally, but as far as the overall dynamics, it's changed. And if you have stated homosexuals, then you have allowed that. Now, like I said, if it's a single homosexual, I know that there will be guys in the unit who will care and that will hurt that unit because of their feelings. But if you put a couple of homosexuals, then you allow this unusual dynamic to start occurring in a confined environment that goes away for six months at a time.

B. I have, through my uncle, known quite a number of gay men. Everyone of them, without exception, has admitted that they cannot look at another man without considering them as a sexual prospect.

C. I have trouble looking at women without thinking about that.

B. But we're not berthing with the women. We're not in the same heads, or showers. The confined environment of a sea-going Navy unit creates an intensity and a closeness where that sexual tension will tear that unit apart. It's okay for me to walk down the street and think a woman has nice legs. But I can't be thinking of that of the S3 Division Officer. I shouldn't be thinking of that. On my last ship the Sales officer was a real shithead. He was as useless as goose shit on a pump handle. He was replaced by the first female officer who every reported aboard the ship, and she was fantastic. And I told my boss, "Hey, I'd let her work for me any day." And he said the real test is, "would you work for her?" And I would. I would. But she was engaged. I'm married. And this brings into it the idea of gay marriages, I guess. You could explore that one forever. But you cannot ignore that dynamic. Gay men are, by nature, promiscuous.

A. Men are promiscuous.

B. And when you compound that with the availability of similarly inclined people, then you've got a real problem on your hands. Just as a note, if you want to do a case study, go down to [a local] ROTC unit where the lesbians have taken over. My son is a junior [in highschool], and the female company commanders are engaging in open homosexual behavior at the ROTC building in uniform. And such public displays of affection are specifically against the rules between boys and girls.

Q. In some of our other interviews, we discussed that the policy itself may actually be creating a unit cohesion problem. For instance, if you suspect an individual of being a homosexual, but you don't know for sure. And you are friends with this person, but you try not to get to know him too well, because you don't want to find out too much about his private life because if you found out, you would be under some kind of obligation to turn him in, or get him out of the Navy. Some people have thought this situation

causes a unit cohesion problem because that individual, maybe is not ostracized, but is not included in the group, because you don't want to find out.

B. You're going to find that kind of stuff no matter who you're dealing with. This guy's a democrat, I don't want to deal with him.

Q. But the difference is that if you found out that some guy is a democrat, he's not going to be discharged for the Navy because of it. And you're under no obligation to try to kick him out.

A. I don't understand this. Say this friend of mine who I found out was gay. If I found out that he is gay, am I under some obligation to divulge that information. Isn't it up to him to tell that to someone . . .

Q. If he makes a statement that he is homosexual, that is against current regulations.

D. But if he makes the statement to A., and A's personal viewpoint is not to care, A's not under any obligation to tell.

A. Am I under a legal obligation to tell?

Q. The guy is breaking a regulation.

A. What regulation has he broken?

D. The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

A. He told me. Is that what that means? Don't tell anybody? Who do they mean by "Don't Tell"? Don't tell who?

Q. That is the question that has come up in other groups. An individual might feel that he doesn't want to have to be the one to turn in a friend. So, he doesn't want to know anything about the guy's life. So, he doesn't include the guy.

D. I don't think the policy, as it stands, requires him to turn him in.

C. I don't either.

D. My understanding is that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" means don't tell your chain of command; don't tell the Navy.

B. That's also my understanding.

Q. Okay.

B. That statement that you made earlier, that homosexuality is incompatible with military service. Is that an actual statement? An actual sentence in the policy?

Q. Yes.

B. I submit to you that's in contrast to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Q. That is written in the policy.

B. I'm telling you that they're opposing. That means two different things.

A. You're saying that the policy says we acknowledge we have gay people, and we're letting them stay in?

B. Yes. In that case, homosexuality is compatible.

Q. The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy essentially says that it's incompatible with military service. We understand that there are homosexuals in the military. As long as we don't know about them, we will not pursue an investigation to find out about them.

B. Then the statement is a lie. Because it's saying homosexuality is compatible with military service. What it's saying is homosexual behavior, whether it's physically or verbally manifested, is incompatible.

D. I understand where you're coming from. But if I say lying, cheating and stealing are incompatible with military service, we can agree on that, right? I don't go around and ask a guy everyday if he is a liar, a cheater, or a stealer. If his lying, cheating and stealing does not come into the open in the military service, then I don't have any reason to doubt him. So I don't have to go around asking. That's like witch trial stuff. I think that the intent is to say, lying, cheating and stealing is not compatible, but I'm not going to go on a witch hunt. If it comes out, then it comes out, and you're out.

Q. When the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was implemented, it was viewed as a compromise between lifting the ban altogether and discriminating against homosexuals. Many senior leaders were adamantly opposed to lifting the ban. So you think that their opposition accurately reflects the views of the military at large?

C. Absolutely.

D. Yes.

A. Yes.

B. These guys are a resource. And as long as they don't manifest their sexual orientation by actions or vocalizing their orientation, then the cost associated with their orientation is nonexistent. As soon as they manifest that behavior, then you've introduced a whole new set of baggage to their contribution.



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